United Nations A/65/PV.10

General Assembly
Sixty-fifth session

Official Records

10th plenary meeting
Wednesday, 22 September 2010, 10 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Deiss ..... (Switzerland)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 p.m.

High-level plenary meeting as a contribution to the 2010 International Year of Biodiversity

Agenda item 20 (*continued*)

Sustainable development

(f) Convention on Biological Diversity

The President (*spoke in French*): This is the closing plenary of the high-level meeting as a contribution to the International Year of Biodiversity. I wish to welcome all the high-level guests who have joined us today. We have had fruitful discussions throughout the day.

(*spoke in English*)

Today, as a contribution to the International Year of Biodiversity, world leaders met for the first time for a high-level meeting of the General Assembly on biodiversity and reaffirmed the political will to reverse the alarming loss of biodiversity occurring throughout our planet. I am very pleased to present a summary of today's meaningful discussions, which I will transmit to the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, to be held next month in Nagoya, Japan.

First, Member States and other participants emphasized the importance of biodiversity and healthy ecosystems for achieving the Millennium Development Goals, especially in poverty eradication. They drew attention to the fact that continued biodiversity loss can have a particularly adverse impact on the poor and other populations that depend on such natural resources as fisheries and agriculture. In order to protect biodiversity and its many services, including clean water, medicine and a buffer against natural disasters, Member States and other participants noted that it is important fully to achieve the three objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

In this regard, they attached great significance to securing successful outcomes at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. That meeting will address three interconnected issues: access to and benefit sharing of genetic resources, a post-2010 strategic plan for biodiversity, and international support for the implementation of biodiversity strategies in developing countries. They recognized that progress on one issue would depend upon progress on the other two.

While noting the progress made to date towards the negotiation of the draft protocol on access to and benefit sharing of genetic resources, Member States and other participants shared the concern that some issues are still outstanding. They called for a stronger political impetus and flexibility on the part of all parties in the negotiations to ensure the adoption of an effective protocol at the Nagoya meeting.

The tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties will present an important opportunity to develop a post-2010 strategic plan that contains ambitious, measurable and time-bound biodiversity targets for 2020. That plan would provide a common

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10-54533 (E)

Please recycle

framework for action on biodiversity at the international, regional, national and local levels and across various issues, from terrestrial species protection to the halting of ocean acidification. If the strategic plan is to be translated into a concrete outcome, it will need to be integrated into national biodiversity targets and strategies.

A decade for biodiversity, as well as the proposed South-South multi-year plan of action, would support the implementation of the new strategic plan. Furthermore, noting the important linkage between scientific knowledge and effective policy-making, Member States and other participants stressed the importance of establishing an intergovernmental science-policy platform for biodiversity and ecosystem services, and welcomed the progress achieved at the intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder meeting held in June 2010 in Busan, Republic of Korea, and facilitated by the United Nations Environment Programme.

The true economic values of biodiversity and the ecosystem services it underpins are now being identified to their full extent. Member States and other participants considered it important that such investigation continue as a matter of priority. They called for strengthening the biodiversity and economy nexus by incorporating the true values of biodiversity into economic theory, financial planning and investments in all sectors, as well as in policy and planning processes at all levels.

The green economy, the economics of ecosystems and biodiversity, and payments for ecosystem services were mentioned as important concepts and initiatives. Member States and other participants also recognized that biodiversity and healthy ecosystems are an essential part of the solution to the challenges of climate change. They noted that there are substantial benefits to be gained from the coherent implementation of the three Rio conventions, as well as other biodiversity-related conventions. For example, initiatives for reduced emissions from deforestation and forest degradation could provide co-benefits for biodiversity and local livelihoods. The upcoming Nagoya and Cancún meetings later this year and the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development 2012 will provide timely opportunities to ensure that measures taken under the related conventions are mutually supportive.

Recognizing that many countries lack the resources and capabilities effectively to implement their biodiversity strategies and commitments, Member States and participants called for bold action to ensure that these countries have access to financial resources and technology transfer. They also called for increased capacity-building and scientific and technical cooperation. In addition, Member States and other participants emphasized the need to mobilize civil society and the private sector. Indigenous and local communities, women and youth should be fully involved in the implementation of the new biodiversity strategic plan.

Finally, noting that the Geneva call for action issued by past and future presidencies of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, Member States and participants noted that if current rates of biodiversity loss are not reversed, there will be drastic consequences for human societies. They recognized the need for coordinated and urgent action across all sectors of Government and society to address the underlying drivers of biodiversity loss. There is a need to reform our means of production, consumption and economic growth to ensure that we live within the ecological limits. Together, we can find ways to protect Mother Earth and live in harmony with nature.

(*spoke in French*)

I call on the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

Ms. Salerno Caldera (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): My country, Mr. President, wishes to recognize your efforts in putting together today's talks. We have a question. Is it possible to modify the language of the summary you have just read out? We feel that the paragraph concerning the platform on technical services is not an exact reflection of today's conversations and presentations. May I ask you clarify this so that I can then explain further?

The President (*spoke in French*): We note the statement made by the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. My summary does not mention the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly, so I would be perfectly happy to listen to any additional comment she may wish to make now. I might add that the summary I read out is a summary of the debate

prepared by those who organized it; it is not an official document of the General Assembly.

Ms. Salerno Caldera (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The question of biological diversity is a substantive and essential issue comprised of many, highly technical components. At this time, the issue of the platform is on the substantive agenda of the discussions to take place at the Nagoya Conference.

The summary mentions that Member States stressed the importance of establishing a platform. That prejudges the results of the Nagoya Conference and does not reflect the fact that various States, including my country, pointed out that, first, the Committee concluded that the question had not been addressed and we believed that it should have been; and that, secondly, the text does not reflect our position that not all Member States have recognized the importance of establishing such a platform.

My country in particular would like to know whether it would be possible to amend the language. We believe that it would be better to say that some States considered the importance of establishing a platform. In that way, the interactive debate we held today would not be prejudging the outcome of Nagoya.

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly takes note of the statement made by the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. As I said, the substantive discussion will take place in Nagoya.

We have now come to the end of our deliberations. I thank all participants for their patience, and especially those who have stayed to the very end.

The meeting rose at 10.20 p.m.

United Nations A/65/PV.11

General Assembly
Sixty-fifth session

Official Records

11th plenary meeting
Thursday, 23 September 2010, 9 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Deiss ..... (Switzerland)

The meeting was called to order at 9 a.m.

Agenda item 108

Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/65/1)

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with the decision taken at its 2nd plenary meeting, held on 17 September 2010, the General Assembly will hear a presentation by the Secretary-General of his annual report on the work of the Organization, under agenda item 108. I now give the floor to the Secretary-General.

The Secretary-General (*spoke in French*): Welcome to New York in this beautiful autumn season, and welcome to the opening of this sixty-fifth general debate.

I congratulate you, Mr. President, and I look forward to working closely with you in the year ahead across the full range of challenges facing the community of nations.

(*spoke in English*)

We, the peoples of the United Nations, are bound by certain sacred duties and obligations: to care for the welfare of others, to resolve conflicts peacefully, to act in the world with empathy and understanding and to practise tolerance and mutual respect as a bedrock principle of civilization.

Today, we are being tested. Social inequalities are growing, among nations and within. Everywhere, people live in fear of losing jobs and incomes. Too many are caught in conflict; women and children are bearing the brunt. And we see a new politics at work — a politics of polarization. We hear the language of hate, false divisions between "them" and "us", those who insist on their way or no way. Amid such uncertainty, so much confusion of purpose, we naturally seek a moral compass. At the United Nations, we find the proper path in community, global cause, fair decisions and mutual responsibility for a destiny we share.

This is the soul of global governance, the theme of this General Assembly: a collective stand, principled and pragmatic, against forces that would divide us. And that is why the United Nations remains the indispensable global institution for the twenty-first century. As we gather today, in solidarity, let us recognize that this is a season for pulling together, for consolidating progress and for putting our shoulder to the wheel and delivering results — real results for people most in need — as only the United Nations can do.

Together, over the past three years, we embraced an ambitious agenda, framed by three overarching ideas for our time: a more prosperous world, free of the deepest poverty; a cleaner, greener and more sustainable world for our children; and a safer world, free of nuclear weapons. Those are the great challenges of our era. They are not dreams; they are opportunities within our power to grasp.

Together, we have made progress. We will press ahead with fresh thinking, fresh approaches, a strong sense of leadership and political will. The Millennium

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Development Goals summit showed our collective determination. World leaders came together with concrete national plans to meet the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. They agreed on a responsible and mutually accountable partnership, a partnership that will better the lives of billions of people within our generation. Our challenge is to deliver on this promise, to turn hopes into realities.

We must draw on lessons learned over the past decade: helping people to help themselves; investing resources where they have the greatest effect — smart investment in education, decent work, health, smallholder agriculture, infrastructure and green energy; realizing the importance of putting women at the fore.

That is why, at the summit, I welcomed the endorsement of our Global Strategy for Women and Children's Health. Backed by billions of dollars in new commitments from Governments, business, non-governmental organizations and philanthropic organizations, this was a tangible expression of global solidarity.

That is also why, last week, I named a dynamic new head of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. In Michelle Bachelet, the former President of Chile, we found a global leader who can inspire billions of women and girls around the world. We must support her to the utmost, because by empowering women, we empower societies.

Three years ago, we called climate change the defining challenge of our era, and so it remains. Clearly, the road towards a comprehensive binding agreement in Cancunand beyond will not be easy. And yet, we have made progress, and we can make more.

This is a year to build on important areas of agreement — on financing for adaptation and mitigation, on technology transfer, on capacity-building and on preventing deforestation. In the longer term, we face the 50-50-50 challenge. By 2050, the world's population will grow by 50 per cent. To keep climate change in check, we will need to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 50 per cent by then.

The world looks to us for creative solutions. And that is why, on Sunday, we hosted the first meeting of the High-level Panel on Global Sustainability. I am confident that it will stimulate new thinking as we work towards Rio+20 in 2012.

(*spoke in French*)

On nuclear disarmament as well, we see new momentum, namely, a new START agreement, the Summit on Nuclear Security and a successful Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Our role is to keep pushing to find a path to bring the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty into force and to realize agreements on fissile materials and on securing nuclear materials and facilities. Tomorrow, we will host a High-level Meeting on Revitalizing the Work of the Conference on Disarmament. I believe the next few years will be critical. Will we advance our work on non-proliferation and disarmament, or will we slide back? It is up to us.

(*spoke in English*)

As always, over the past year we were there for those in urgent need: the people of Pakistan, coping with epic floods and the monumental task of reconstruction; the people of Haiti, where the work of rebuilding goes on, and where so many lost their lives, including 101 of our colleagues; and the people of Somalia, the Sudan, the Niger and Gaza.

As always, we continue to work for peace and security. Three years ago, in partnership with the African Union, we deployed the first peacekeeping force in Darfur. During the coming year, the United Nations will be critical to keeping a larger peace, as north and south Sudan decide their future. Tomorrow's high-level meeting on the Sudan will help chart that path.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, we have adapted our Mission to new and changing circumstances.We have worked closely with the African Union in Somalia.We have seen victories for preventive diplomacy, as well. In Iraq, we helped broker the compromises that kept this year's elections on track. In Guinea, we stand with regional partners in insisting on democracy. In Sierra Leone, we helped to defuse confrontations and keep peace moving forward. Quick-footed diplomacy helped contain the troubles in Kyrgyzstan. In Afghanistan, we carry on our work despite exceptionally difficult security and humanitarian conditions. We will seek to reduce tensions on the Korean peninsula and encourage the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to return to the

Six-Party Talks. On Iran, we continue to urge the Government to engage constructively with the international community and comply fully with the relevant Security Council resolutions.

In the Middle East, we see encouraging movement towards a comprehensive peace. Working with the Quartet, we will do everything possible to help bring negotiations to a successful conclusion. I strongly discourage either side from any action that would hold back progress.

In all we do, human rights are at the core. There can be no peace without justice. The global community has worked hard and long to usher in a new age of accountability. In our modern era, let us send a clear message: no nation, large or small, can violate the rights of its citizens with impunity.

(*spoke in French*)

Let me close on a theme that has defined our work together: building a stronger United Nations for a better world. The renovation of the Secretariat is on track, on schedule and on budget. Organizational changes introduced over the past few years are bearing fruit. Among them is the New Horizons Initiative to streamline peacekeeping operations. In consultation with the Member States and our staff, we will do all in our power to create a faster, more modern, flexible and effective United Nations work force by recruiting the best talent of tomorrow.

(*spoke in English*)

Today and in the months ahead, we will speak of many things, important issues affecting all humankind. Let us remember, in these difficult times, that we are being tested. Let us remember the many lives lost in service to our ideals. Let us remember that the world still looks to the United Nations for moral and political leadership. The great goals are within reach. We can achieve them by looking forward, pulling together and uniting our strength as a community of nations in the name of the larger good. I count on your leadership and commitment.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Secretary-General for his presentation.

Agenda item 8

General debate

The President (*spoke in French*): For my introductory remarks, I have chosen the theme "A strong, inclusive and open United Nations as the guarantor of global governance".

As we open the general debate of the sixty-fifth session, we already have a week of intensive work behind us. I would like to thank the General Assembly for its contribution to the success of the High-level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals. By reaffirming its determination to overcome poverty and suffering throughout the world, the international community that you here represent has sent a strong message to the whole of humankind.

Much remains to be done. We must reaffirm our resolve. We know that additional efforts are needed. We have an action plan; now we must implement it. To succeed, we need a genuine global partnership, born of inclusive global governance, in which all stakeholders can make themselves heard.

But this global partnership is needed in many other areas too. Our world is now more interdependent and more interconnected, and it faces global challenges that affect all countries and their citizens, whether they like it or not and regardless of who is responsible.

Current realities provide all too many examples of this. Poverty, conflicts, global warming, the economic and financial crisis, migration, pandemics, terrorism, international crime and a whole range of other issues have consequences that cannot be managed at an individual level, and which humankind can address only through common global strategies.

In establishing such a global partnership, we come up against the difficulty of building consensus on the action to be taken. It is for that reason that I have chosen global governance or, more specifically, "Reaffirming the central role of the United Nations in global governance", as the suggested theme of our general debate.

The United Nations has unique legitimacy to play a central role. With its 192 Member States, the General Assembly is a near-universal body and reflects the diversity of the situations and interests at stake. It is there to promote the rights of every woman and man on

our planet. Any matters within the scope of the Charter may be discussed by the General Assembly.

The United Nations, as an operational entity, also has the expertise and the presence on the ground to play that central role. I am thinking in particular of its peacekeeping missions, humanitarian operations and natural-disaster-response activities, as well as all the work carried out far from the media spotlight. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the thousands of United Nations staff members who, with great commitment and often at risk to life and limb, work to promote peace and prosperity around the world. We owe them our sincere appreciation on behalf of all those who enjoy a better life thanks to their endeavours.

However, there is a danger that the United Nations could be marginalized as other actors emerge on the international scene. The United Nations has been criticized for not being effective or efficient enough. Determining urgent action through a more restricted forum can seem easier and more expeditious. This much should be clear: the point is not to deny the role of such entities as the Group of 20. The economic and financial crisis has highlighted the importance of a rapid and coordinated response. However, there is a vital and pressing need to bridge the efforts of different actors. The mechanisms for communication, consultation and cooperation between those entities and other States must be improved. Only the United Nations and its General Assembly can do so.

In order for the United Nations to comprehensively fulfil its global governance role, we must press for it to be strong, inclusive and open. A close connection must be established between States and the private sector, civil society and regional actors. We must listen to other key actors and interact with them outside the Assembly.

A strong United Nations requires a decisive effort to reform the Organization and, in particular, to revitalize the General Assembly, reform the Security Council and review the work of the Human Rights Council and the Peacebuilding Commission. We must also strengthen the economic organizations of the United Nations, enabling them fully to serve the purpose for which they were established. Lastly, it is up to Member States to make the United Nations a strong instrument that can take centre stage in confronting global challenges.

In the course of the general debate, I invite members to share their views on inclusive global governance. Numerous issues await urgent action. Numerous wars, disasters and tragedies have persisted for too long to allow any delay. The world expects us to be more effective in uniting around actions that enjoy universal endorsement and commitment. We must develop the best possible linkage between legitimacy and effectiveness. As President of the General Assembly, I intend to convene informal meetings on this topic.

Having suggested some avenues for discussion, I wish to listen to members. It is now up to you, the leaders of the world as a whole, to take a stand and proclaim that too many problems and scourges have persisted for too long, and together determine milestones leading to a global partnership in which all forces will be united and all countries will feel included in joint effective action for a better world. We must also have the courage to debate difficult questions, but we must do so in a spirit of friendship and openness.

Before giving the floor to the first speaker for this morning, I would like to remind Member States that the list of speakers for the general debate has been established on the agreed basis that statements should be no longer than 15 minutes, so as to enable all speakers to be heard at a given meeting. I should like to appeal to all speakers to deliver their statements at a normal speed so that proper interpretation in the six official United Nations languages can be provided.

I would also like to draw members' attention to the decision taken by the Assembly at previous sessions, namely, that the practice of expressing congratulations inside the General Assembly Hall after a speech has been delivered is strongly discouraged. In that connection, I would like to remind members that, after delivering their statements, speakers are kindly invited to exit the General Assembly Hall through what is known as the Swiss Room, or GA-200, which is located behind the podium, before returning to their seats.

May I take it that the General Assembly agrees to proceed in the same manner during the general debate of the sixth-fifth session?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in French*): Finally, I should like to draw the attention of members to the fact that, during the general debate, official photographs of all speakers are taken by the Department of Public Information. Members interested in obtaining these photographs are kindly requested to contact the Photo Library of the United Nations.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Celso Luiz Nunes Amorim, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Brazil.

Mr. Amorim (*spoke in Portuguese; English text provided by the delegation*): It is a great honour for me to come to this rostrum to speak on behalf of the people and Government of Brazil. I bring the greetings of President Lula.

Within days, over 130 million Brazilians will go to the polls and will write another important chapter in the history of our democracy. During President Lula's two terms, Brazil has changed. Sustained economic growth, financial stability, social inclusion and the full exercise of democracy have converged and reinforced each another. Over 20 million Brazilians rose out of poverty, and many others out of extreme poverty. Nearly 30 million people joined the middle class.

Strong and transparent public policies reduced inequalities in income, access and opportunities. Millions of Brazilians rose to dignity and real citizenship. The strengthened domestic market protected us from the worst effects of the global crisis set in motion by the financial casino in the richest countries in the world.

Brazil is proud to have achieved almost all of the Millennium Development Goals and to be well on the way to meeting them all by 2015. The inability of any country to achieve those Goals must be seen as a failure of the entire international community. The promotion of development is a collective responsibility.

Brazil has been working to assist other countries to replicate its successful experiences. In the past years Brazil's actions on the international stage have been driven by a sense of solidarity. We are convinced that it is possible to have a humanistic foreign policy without losing sight of national interests. That policy is supported by South-South cooperation. The IBSA Facility for Poverty and Hunger Alleviation, created by India, Brazil and South Africa, finances projects in Haiti, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, Palestine, Cambodia, Burundi, Laos and Sierra Leone. Brazil has substantially increased its humanitarian aid and the number of its cooperation projects with poorer countries.

Africa occupies a very special place in Brazilian diplomacy. Since taking office, President Lula has been to Africa 11 times and visited over 20 countries in the continent. We have set up an agricultural research office in Ghana, a model cotton farm in Mali, a manufacturing plant for antiretroviral drugs in Mozambique and professional training centres in five African countries. Through trade and investment, we are helping the African continent to develop its enormous potential and reduce its dependency on a few centres of political and economic power.

Brazil is particularly concerned about Guinea-Bissau. It is not by isolating or abandoning Guinea-Bissau that the international community will help it address the challenges it still faces. We need intelligent modalities for cooperation, which can promote development and stability and encourage the necessary reforms, especially with regard to the armed forces.

This year, in which a significant number of African countries celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of their decolonization, Brazil renews its commitment to an independent, prosperous, just and democratic Africa.

There are few places where international solidarity is more needed than Haiti. We joined the United Nations in mourning the tragedy that took the lives of hundreds of thousands of Haitians. We ourselves lost great Brazilians, including Dr. Zilda Arns — a woman who dedicated her life to the poor, especially children — Mr. Luiz Carlos da Costa, Deputy Head of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti, and 18 of our peacekeepers.

We would like to express our compassion for the suffering of the Haitian people and, above all, our admiration for the stoicism and courage with which they have been facing adversity. The Haitian people know that they can count on Brazil to not only help them maintain order and defend democracy, but also assist in their development. We are keeping our promises and will keep a watchful eye on the situation to ensure that the commitments of the international community go beyond rhetorical statements.

In recent years, the Brazilian Government has invested heavily in South America's integration and peace. We have strengthened our strategic partnership with Argentina. We have reinforced MERCOSUR, including through financial mechanisms unique among developing countries.

The establishment of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) aims at consolidating a genuine zone of peace and prosperity. UNASUR has already demonstrated its value in promoting understanding and the peaceful resolution of conflicts among and within countries in South America and has made foreign interference in our region even more unwarranted. By creating the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, launched in Bahia, Brazil and confirmed in Cancún, Mexico, we have reaffirmed the region's willingness to extend to Central America and the Caribbean the integrationist ideals that animate South Americans.

Brazil reiterates its condemnation, shared by all in Latin America and the Caribbean, of the illegitimate embargo against Cuba. Its sole result has been to hamper the efforts of millions of Cubans in their struggle for development.

We condemn anti-democratic moves, such as the coup d'état in Honduras. The return of former President Zelaya without threats to his freedom is indispensable for the full normalization of Honduras' relations with the region as a whole.

When President Lula first spoke in this Hall, in 2003, the world lived under the shadow of the invasion of Iraq. We hope we have learned the lessons of that episode. Blind faith in intelligence reports tailored to justify political goals must be rejected. We must ban once and for all the use of force that is inconsistent with international law. Furthermore, it is fundamental to value and promote dialogue and the peaceful resolution of disputes.

In order to achieve a truly secure world, the promise of the total elimination of nuclear weapons must be fulfilled. Unilateral reductions are welcome but insufficient, especially when they occur in tandem with the modernization of nuclear arsenals.

As President Lula has often stated, multilateralism is the international face of democracy. The United Nations must be the main center of decision-making in international politics.

The changes that have occurred in the world over the past few decades and the series of crises we have faced in food security, climate change, the economic and financial sphere and peace and security make it urgent to redefine the rules that govern international relations.

The financial crisis of 2008 accelerated change in global economic governance. The Group of Twenty (G-20) replaced the Group of Eight as the primary forum for deliberation on economic issues. The G-20 was a step forward, but it must be adjusted to ensure, for instance, greater African participation. The relevance and legitimacy of the G-20 can be preserved only if it maintains frank and permanent dialogue with all the nations represented in this General Assembly.

At the height of the crisis, we succeeded in avoiding the worst-case scenario: a surge of uncontrolled protectionism, which would have thrown the world into a deep depression. But the developed countries have not demonstrated the necessary commitment to global economic stability. They continue to let themselves be guided by parochial interests. Nowhere is that more evident than in the Doha round of negotiations in the World Trade Organization. A balanced solution to that negotiating process, which has lasted for almost 10 years, would promote economic expansion and the development of the poorest countries, with the end of distorting subsidies and protectionist barriers. After all, poor countries are the greatest victims of the narrow and selfish view that still prevails in international trade.

Reforms have also been insufficient in the financial sector. Unjustified resistance is preventing the implementation of agreed-upon changes. Obstinacy in maintaining anachronistic privileges perpetuates and deepens the illegitimacy of institutions.

Another major challenge we face is achieving a global, comprehensive and ambitious agreement on climate change. In order to move forward on this matter, countries must stop hiding behind each other. Brazil, like other developing countries, has done its part. But in Copenhagen, several delegations, especially from the rich world, sought excuses to evade their moral and political obligations. They forgot that one cannot negotiate with Nature.

A positive outcome of the sixteenth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, with real progress in

forests, financing for adaptation and mitigation and a reaffirmation of the Kyoto commitments, is indispensable. The Mexican presidency can count on Brazil's engagement to achieve this objective.

In 2012, we will host, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, the Rio+20 Conference. On behalf of the Brazilian Government, I invite all delegations to fulfill the promise of truly sustainable development.

The reform of global governance has not yet reached the field of international peace and security. In the economic and environmental areas, the wealthiest nations have already understood that they cannot do without the cooperation of the poor and emerging countries. When it comes to war and peace, however, the traditional players are reluctant to share power.

The Security Council must be reformed and expanded to allow for greater participation by developing countries, including as permanent members. We cannot continue with working methods that lack transparency and that allow the permanent members to discuss behind closed doors and for as long as they wish issues that concern all mankind.

Brazil has sought to live up to what is expected from all Security Council members, including non-permanent ones — namely, that they contribute to peace. For this reason, we made a serious effort to find an instrument that could enable progress towards a solution of the Iranian nuclear question. In so doing, we relied on proposals that had been presented as a unique opportunity to build confidence between the parties. The Tehran Declaration of 17 May, signed by Brazil, Turkey and Iran, removed obstacles that, according to the very authors of those proposals, had previously prevented an agreement.

The Tehran Declaration does not exhaust the issue and was never intended to do so. We are convinced that, once back to the negotiating table, the parties will find ways to resolve other issues, such as 20 per cent enrichment and the stock of enriched uranium accumulated since October 2009. In spite of the sanctions, we still hope that the logic of dialogue and understanding will prevail. The world cannot run the risk of a new conflict like the one in Iraq. We have been insisting, therefore, that the Iranian Government maintain an attitude of flexibility and openness towards negotiations, but it is necessary that all those concerned also demonstrate such willingness.

We are closely following developments in the peace process in the Middle East. We hope the direct talks between Palestinians and Israelis launched earlier this month will produce concrete results that lead to the creation of a Palestinian State within the pre-1967 borders, a State that ensures for the Palestinian people a dignified life, co-existing side by side and in peace with the State of Israel.

However, it is not the format of the dialogue that will determine whether it will yield results. What matters is the willingness of the parties to reach a just and lasting peace. That will be easier with the involvement of all those concerned. Freezing the construction of settlements in the occupied territories, lifting the Gaza blockade and ending attacks against civilian populations are crucial elements in the process.

In his visit to Israel, Palestine and Jordan in March, President Lula spoke with government leaders and representatives of civil society about those issues. We frequently receive in Brasilia the leaders of various countries of the region, who seek support in resolving problems that have afflicted them for decades and have not been solved through the traditional means and actors. Brazil, which has about 10 million people of Arab descent and a sizeable Jewish community living together in harmony, will not shy away from making its contribution to the peace that we all yearn for.

Brazil's commitment to the promotion of human rights is also unwavering. We favour a non-selective, objective and multilateral treatment of human rights, without politicization or bias, in which everyone — the rich and the poor, the powerful and the weak — is subject to the same scrutiny. In our view, the exercise of human rights is more effectively ensured by dialogue and cooperation than by arrogant attitudes derived from self-declared moral superiority.

During his eight years in office, President Lula has developed a foreign policy that is independent, free of any sort of submission, and respectful of Brazil's neighbours and partners. It is an innovative foreign policy, which does not distance itself from the fundamental values of the Brazilian nation: peace, pluralism, tolerance and solidarity.

Just as Brazil has changed and will continue to change, the world is also changing. We must deepen and accelerate this process. With the technology and wealth at our disposal, there is no longer any justification for hunger, poverty and epidemics of

preventable diseases. We can no longer live with discrimination, injustice and authoritarianism. We must face the challenges of nuclear disarmament, sustainable development and freer and fairer trade. Rest assured, Brazil will continue to fight to make these ideals a reality.

Address by Ms. Doris Leuthard, President of the Swiss Confederation

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Swiss Confederation.

To be clear: Switzerland, in taking this time slot, is not presenting itself as a new world Power. The President of the United States of America is not yet able to arrive in the Assembly Hall, and Switzerland has thus made itself available to fill the slot that is free as a result.

Ms. Doris Leuthard, President of the Swiss Confederation, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations Her Excellency Ms. Doris Leuthard, President of the Swiss Confederation, and to invite her to address the Assembly.

President Leuthard (*spoke in French*): It is a great honour for me to address, on behalf of Switzerland, the General Assembly, which this year is presided over by my compatriot, Mr. Joseph Deiss. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the President on his election. His election is a great honour for Switzerland and is not only a personal recognition of President Deiss and his work but also of our country's commitment to the United Nations as a member of the Organization and a defender of multilateralism.

We find ourselves today in a building that is undergoing renovations. The architectural makeover of the United Nations prompts me to ask: what kind of United Nations are we building for the next 10, 20 or 30 years? We need a United Nations that can face the challenges of the future for the good of all. We need a United Nations that will contribute effectively to solving the world's problems. We need Member States that are ready to take full responsibility for building a better world.

The future of the United Nations must reflect the world of tomorrow. Today, nearly one billion people are still malnourished. There will be many more people sharing this planet in the future, and no doubt we will have to make do with fewer resources. Thanks to new developments in technology and information, our citizens participate more directly in the challenges facing our societies. They are increasingly better informed and feel that at least some of the legitimacy of this universal Organization depends on its ability to respond effectively to those challenges. They demand accountability.

In a more globalized world, we must treasure and defend the principles of the United Nations Charter. We must take care to ensure the proper functioning of this common structure in a spirit of solidarity, respect and responsibility.

A strong international community requires solidarity. That means more than providing assistance to countries when they are unable to help their own citizens. It also means reminding States of the responsibilities they have towards their own people in areas such as security, the rule of law, human rights and democracy, and all that in respect for the United Nations Charter. Every woman, every man, every citizen must make his and her contribution to the structure we are building together. At the same time every Member State must be able to place its national interests second to the common good. That is the only way we will be able to find solutions that are in everyone's interest.

Every day we are reminded of the growing and increasingly complex global challenges confronting us: the economic and financial crisis, climate change, energy and food security, development and poverty, and peace and security. The search for sustainable solutions to those challenges calls for real governance, governance, moreover, that must reflect the new realities in the world. The new-found prosperity of some must go hand in hand with new responsibilities. States whose economic success enables them to play a more active role in the governance of the world must accept the new responsibilities that go with that active role.

The United Nations enjoys a unique legitimacy because of its universal membership. Its legitimacy also derives from the issues it addresses, which concern us all. This week's agenda is the best possible

proof. But the legitimacy of an organization also depends on its performance and its ability to respond to the expectations placed on it.

By that standard the United Nations sometimes delivers mixed results. At times it seems ill-equipped and hesitant to act. The power derived from universal membership becomes a burden when we Member States are divided. Our debates should not be limited to the lowest common denominator. They must lead to action and to results in the interest of the common good of humanity.

If the United Nations fails to act, other groups representing only a fraction of the countries of the world will step in, zealous for effective action, and play a central role in global governance. As far as Switzerland is concerned, such groups lack legitimacy by virtue of their limited composition. It is therefore crucial for the United Nations and its principal organs to remain at the centre of world governance. That is why we must take care to ensure that the legitimacy of this universal body does not suffer from a lack of efficiency. To make progress in building a better world, it is our collective responsibility to meet a global challenge with a global response. Switzerland wants to contribute to this joint effort.

Concerted global action is required in the following areas.

The Millennium Development Goals must be implemented rapidly and fully. We know that dropping a sack of rice from a helicopter is not enough. We must instead teach people how to grow rice. Still today, 1.4 billion people around the world are living in extreme poverty. Every day too many mothers and children die of malnutrition and lack of care. We know that huge financial means are needed after a disaster. Money flows in emergency situations, but who is still concerned three years later? Who is involved in the reconstruction?

Binding objectives must be defined as quickly as possible for reducing carbon dioxide emissions. Nowadays, we have knowledge and we have clean and green technology. We must take action, each nation with measures aimed at its own targets. Waiting for the industrialized countries to invest in the South will not lead anywhere. Here too, all must fulfil their own responsibilities. This year in Mexico we still have an opportunity to make progress. The recent natural disasters are unmistakable signs. Switzerland will reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 20 per cent by the year 2020.

Thirty years after the Cold War, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction remains a grave threat to peace and security. But for civilian populations, the real devastation is caused by small arms and light weapons. Terrorists benefit from that situation by easily supplying themselves in the arms market. Switzerland, together with other countries, is supporting the full implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. That initiative provides for the involvement of specialists in humanitarian aid and education.

Gender equality must at last become a reality. Access to education and health for women and girls has been restricted for decades. More than others, they have been victims of poverty. They have also been the targets of systematic violence in armed conflicts. It is high time to make full use of their potential in mediation and reconstruction in countries affected by conflict. In that context, Switzerland welcomes the creation of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women — UN Women — which brings us closer to the fulfilment of this vision.

We must avoid making the United Nations an immutable historic monument, but rather turn it into a dynamic organization. The United Nations is the only organization in the world with the legitimacy to represent all nations and all peoples. It is the only legitimate organization in the world capable of narrowing differences and restoring a balance between regions.

For that to happen, however, every Member State must accept its responsibilities and start with the task of putting its own house in order. Discussion and preparing reports are not enough, however; we need to act. Each Member State must commit itself clearly within the Organization to respond to the urgent questions facing the world of today and of tomorrow. Such commitments will strengthen confidence in the United Nations and its credibility.

Switzerland remains firmly convinced of the aptness of a multilateral approach, with the United Nations at its centre. With the contributions of everyone in this Hall today we will be able to create a more just, peaceful and prosperous world. I thank all who are gathered here for their collective commitment.

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly I wish to thank the President of the Swiss Confederation for the statement she has just made.

Ms. Doris Leuthard, President of the Swiss Confederation, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Barack Obama, President of the United States of America

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the United States of America.

Mr. Barack Obama, President of the United States of America, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Barack Obama, President of the United States of America, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Obama: It is a great honour to address this Assembly for the second time, nearly two years after my election as President of the United States. We know this is no ordinary time for our people. We each come here with our own problems and priorities. But there are also challenges that we share in common as leaders and as nations.

We meet within an institution built from the rubble of war, designed to unite the world in pursuit of peace. And we meet within a city that for centuries has welcomed people from across the globe, demonstrating that individuals of every colour, faith and station can come together to pursue opportunity, build a community and live with the blessing of human liberty.

Outside the doors of this Hall, the blocks and neighbourhoods of this great city tell the story of a difficult decade. Nine years ago, the destruction of the World Trade Center signalled a threat that respected no boundary of dignity or decency. Two years ago this month, a financial crisis on Wall Street devastated American families on Main Street. These separate challenges have affected people around the world. Men and women and children have been murdered by extremists from Casablanca to London, from Jalalabad to Jakarta. The global economy suffered an enormous blow during the financial crisis, crippling markets and deferring the dreams of millions on every continent. Underneath these challenges to our security and prosperity lie deeper fears: that ancient hatreds and religious divides are once again ascendant; that a world which has grown more interconnected has somehow slipped beyond our control.

These are some of the challenges that my Administration has confronted since we came into office. And today, I would like to talk to the Assembly about what we have done over the last 20 months to meet these challenges; what our responsibility is to pursue peace in the Middle East; and what kind of world we are trying to build in this twenty-first century.

Let me begin with what we have done. I have had no greater focus as President than rescuing our economy from potential catastrophe. And in an age when prosperity is shared, we could not do this alone. So America has joined with nations around the world to spur growth and the renewed demand that could restart job creation.

We are reforming our system of global finance, beginning with Wall Street reform here at home, so that a crisis like this never happens again. And we made the Group of 20 the focal point for international coordination, because in a world where prosperity is more diffuse, we must broaden our circle of cooperation to include emerging economies — economies from every corner of the globe.

There is much to show for our efforts, even as there is much work to be done. The global economy has been pulled back from the brink of a depression and is growing once more. We have resisted protectionism and are exploring ways to expand trade and commerce among nations. But we cannot — and will not — rest until these seeds of progress grow into a broader prosperity, not only for all Americans but for peoples around the world.

As for our common security, America is waging a more effective fight against Al-Qaida' while winding down the war in Iraq. Since I took office, the United States has removed nearly 100,000 troops from Iraq. We have done so responsibly as Iraqis have transitioned to lead responsibility for the security of their country. We are now focused on building a lasting partnership with the Iraqi people while keeping our commitment to remove the rest of our troops by the end of next year.

While drawing down in Iraq, we have refocused on defeating Al-Qaida and denying its affiliates safe haven. In Afghanistan, the United States and our allies are pursuing a strategy to break the Taliban's momentum and build the capacity of Afghanistan's Government and security forces so that a transition to Afghan responsibility can begin next July. And from South Asia to the Horn of Africa, we are moving towards a more targeted approach — one that strengthens our partners and dismantles terrorist networks without deploying large American armies.

As we pursue the world's most dangerous extremists, we are also denying them the world's most dangerous weapons and pursuing the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons.

Earlier this year, 47 nations embraced a work plan to secure all vulnerable nuclear materials within four years. We have joined with Russia to sign the most comprehensive arms control treaty in decades. We have reduced the role of nuclear weapons in our security strategy. And here, at the United Nations, we came together to strengthen the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

As part of our effort on non-proliferation, I offered the Islamic Republic of Iran an extended hand last year and underscored that it has both rights and responsibilities as a member of the international community. I also said — in this Hall — that Iran must be held accountable if it failed to meet those responsibilities. And that is what we have done.

Iran is the only party to the NPT that cannot demonstrate the peaceful intentions of its nuclear programme, and those actions have consequences. Through Security Council resolution 1929 (2010), we made it clear that international law is not an empty promise.

Now let me be clear once more: the United States and the international community seek a resolution to our differences with Iran, and the door remains open to diplomacy should Iran choose to walk through it. But the Iranian Government must demonstrate a clear and credible commitment and confirm to the world the peaceful intent of its nuclear programme.

As we combat the spread of deadly weapons, we are also confronting the spectre of climate change. After making historic investments in clean energy and efficiency at home, we helped forge an accord in Copenhagen that — for the first time — commits all major economies to reduce their emissions. We are keenly aware this is just a first step. And going forward, we will support a process in which all major economies meet our responsibilities to protect the planet while unleashing the power of clean energy to serve as an engine of growth and development.

America has also embraced unique responsibilities that come with our power. Since the rains came and the floodwaters rose in Pakistan, we have pledged our assistance, and we should all support the Pakistani people as they recover and rebuild. And when the earth shook and Haiti was devastated by loss, we joined a coalition of nations in response. Today, we honour those from the United Nations family who lost their lives in the earthquake and commit ourselves to stand with the people of Haiti until they can stand on their own two feet.

Amidst this upheaval, we have also been persistent in our pursuit of peace. Last year, I pledged my best efforts to support the goal of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security, as part of a comprehensive peace between Israel and all of its neighbours. We have travelled a winding road over the last 12 months, with few peaks and many valleys. But this month I am pleased that we have pursued direct negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians in Washington, Sharm el-Sheikh and Jerusalem.

Now I recognize that many are pessimistic about this process. The cynics say that Israelis and Palestinians are too distrustful of each other, and too divided internally, to forge lasting peace. Rejectionists on both sides will try to disrupt the process with bitter words and with bombs and gunfire. Some say that the gaps between the parties are too big; the potential for talks to break down is too great; and that after decades of failure peace is simply not possible.

I hear those voices of scepticism. But I ask the Assembly to consider the alternative. If an agreement is not reached, Palestinians will never know the pride and dignity that comes with their own State. Israelis will never know the certainty and security that comes with sovereign and stable neighbours who are committed to coexistence. The hard realities of demography will take over. More blood will be shed. This Holy Land will remain a symbol of our differences, instead of our common humanity.

I refuse to accept that future. We all have a choice to make. Each of us must choose the path of peace. Of course, that responsibility begins with the parties themselves, who must answer the call of history. Earlier this month, at the White House, I was struck by the words of both the Israeli and Palestinian leaders. Prime Minister Netanyahu said, "I came here today to find an historic compromise that will enable both peoples to live in peace, security and dignity". President Abbas said, "We will spare no effort and we will work diligently and tirelessly to ensure these negotiations achieve their cause".

These words must now be followed by action, and I believe that both leaders have the courage to do so. But the road that they have to travel is exceedingly difficult, which is why I call upon Israelis and Palestinians — and the world — to rally behind the goal that these leaders now share.

We know that there will be tests along the way, and that one test is fast approaching. Israel's settlement moratorium has made a difference on the ground and improved the atmosphere for talks.

And our position on this issue is well known. We believe that the moratorium should be extended. We also believe that talks should press on until completed. Now is the time for the parties to help each other overcome this obstacle. Now is the time to build the trust — and provide the time — for substantial progress to be made. Now is the time for this opportunity to be seized, so that it does not slip away.

Now, peace must be made by Israelis and Palestinians, but we each have a responsibility to do our part as well. Those of us who are friends of Israel must understand that true security for the Jewish State requires an independent Palestine — one that allows the Palestinian people to live with dignity and opportunity. And those of us who are friends of the Palestinians must understand that the rights of the Palestinian people will be won only through peaceful means — including genuine reconciliation with a secure Israel.

I know many in this Hall count themselves as friends of the Palestinians. These pledges of friendship must now be supported by deeds. Those who have signed on to the Arab Peace Initiative should seize this opportunity to make it real by taking tangible steps towards the normalization that it promises Israel.

And those who speak on behalf of Palestinian self-government should help the Palestinian Authority politically and financially, and in doing so help the Palestinians build the institutions of their State.

Those who long to see an independent Palestine must also stop trying to tear down Israel. After thousands of years, Jews and Arabs are not strangers in a strange land. After 60 years in the community of nations, Israel's existence must not be a subject for debate.

Israel is a sovereign State, and the historic homeland of the Jewish people. It should be clear to all that efforts to chip away at Israel's legitimacy will be met by the unshakeable opposition of the United States. Efforts to threaten or kill Israelis will do nothing to help the Palestinian people. The slaughter of innocent Israelis is not resistance; it is injustice. And make no mistake: the courage of a man like President Abbas, who stands up for his people in front of the world under very difficult circumstances, is far greater than those who fire rockets at innocent women and children.

The conflict between Israelis and Arabs is as old as the United Nations. And we can come back here next year, as we have for the last 60 years, and make long speeches about it. We can read familiar lists of grievances. We can table the same resolutions. We can further empower the forces of rejectionism and hate. And we can waste more time by carrying forward an argument that will not help a single Israeli or Palestinian child achieve a better life. We can do that.

Or we can say that this time will be different — that this time we will not let terror or turbulence or posturing or petty politics stand in the way. This time we will think, not of ourselves, but of the young girl in Gaza who wants to have no ceiling on her dreams or the young boy in Sderot who wants to sleep without the nightmare of rocket fire.

This time we should draw upon the teachings of tolerance that lie at the heart of the three great religions that see Jerusalem's soil as sacred. This time we should reach for what is best within ourselves. If we do, when we come back here next year, we can have an agreement that will lead to a new State Member of the United Nations — an independent, sovereign State of Palestine living in peace with Israel.

It is our destiny to bear the burdens of the challenges that I have addressed — recession and war and conflict. And there is always a sense of urgency, even emergency, that drives most of our foreign policies. Indeed, after millennia marked by wars, this very institution reflects the desire of human beings to create a forum to deal with emergencies that will inevitably come.

But even as we confront immediate challenges, we must also summon the foresight to look beyond them and consider what we are trying to build over the long term. What is the world that awaits us when today's battles are brought to an end? And, that is what I would like to talk about with the remainder of my time today.

One of the first actions of the General Assembly was to adopt the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. This Declaration begins by stating that, "recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world".

The idea is a simple one — that freedom, justice and peace for the world must begin with freedom, justice and peace in the lives of individual human beings. For the United States, this is a matter of moral and pragmatic assessment. As Robert Kennedy said, "the individual man, the child of God, is the touchstone of value, and all society, groups, the state exist for his benefit".

So we stand up for universal values because it is the right thing to do. But we also know from experience that those who defend these values for their people have been our closest friends and allies, while those who have denied those rights -- whether terrorist groups or tyrannical Governments — have chosen to be our adversaries.

Human rights have never gone unchallenged — not in any of our nations, not in our world. Tyranny is still with us — whether it manifests itself in the Taliban killing girls who try to go to school, a North Korean regime that enslaves its own people, or an armed group in Congo-Kinshasa that use rape as a weapon of war.

In times of economic unease, there can also be an anxiety about human rights. Today, as in past times of economic downturn, some put human rights aside for the promise of short-term stability or the false notion that economic growth can come at the expense of freedom. We see leaders abolishing term limits, we see crackdowns on civil society, we see corruption smothering entrepreneurship and good governance, we see democratic reforms deferred indefinitely.

As I said last year, each country will pursue a path rooted in the culture of its own people. Yet experience shows us that history is on the side of liberty; that the strongest foundation lies in open economies, open societies, and open Governments. To put it simply, democracy, more than any other form of government, delivers for our citizens. And I believe that truth will only grow stronger in a world where the borders between nations are blurred.

America is working to shape a world that fosters this openness. For the rot of a closed or corrupt economy must never eclipse the energy and innovation of human beings.All of us want the right to educate our children, to make a decent wage, to care for the sick, and to be carried as far as our dreams and deeds will take us. But that depends upon economies that tap the power of our people, including the potential of women and girls. That means letting entrepreneurs start a business without paying a bribe and Governments that support opportunity instead of stealing from their people. And that means rewarding hard work, instead of reckless risk-taking.

Yesterday, I put forward a new development policy that will pursue these goals, recognizing that dignity is a human right and global development is in our common interest. America will partner with nations that offer their people a path out of poverty. And together, we must unleash growth that powers by individuals and merging markets in all parts of the globe.

There is no reason why Africa should not be an exporter of agriculture, which is why our food security initiative is empowering farmers. There is no reason why entrepreneurs should not be able to build new markets in every society, which is why I hosted a summit on entrepreneurship earlier this spring, because the obligation of Government is to empower individuals, not to impede them.

The same holds true for civil society. The arc of human progress has been shaped by individuals with the freedom to assemble and by organizations outside of government that insisted upon democratic change

and by free media that held the powerful accountable. We have seen that from the South Africans who stood up to apartheid, to the Poles of Solidarity, to the mothers of the disappeared who spoke out against the Dirty War, to Americans who marched for the rights of all races, including my own.

Civil society is the conscience of our communities and America will always extend our engagement abroad with citizens beyond the halls of Government. And we will call out those who suppress ideas and serve as a voice for those who are voiceless. We will promote new tools of communication so people are empowered to connect with one another and, in repressive societies, to do so with security. We will support a free and open Internet, so individuals have the information to make up their own minds. And it is time to embrace and effectively monitor norms that advance the rights of civil society and guarantee its expansion within and across borders.

Open society supports open government, but it cannot substitute for it. There is no right more fundamental than the right to choose your leaders and determine your destiny. Now, make no mistake: the ultimate success of democracy in the world will not come because the United States dictates it; it will come because individual citizens demand a say in how they are governed.

There is no soil where this cannot take root, just as every democracy reflects the uniqueness of a nation. Later this fall, I will travel to Asia. And I will visit India, which peacefully threw off colonialism and established a thriving democracy of over a billion people.

I will continue to Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim-majority country, which binds together thousands of islands through the glue of representative government and civil society. I will join the Group-of-20 meeting on the Korean peninsula, which provides the world's clearest contrast between a society that is dynamic and open and free, and one that is imprisoned and closed. And I will conclude my trip in Japan, an ancient culture that found peace and extraordinary development through democracy.

Each of these countries gives life to democratic principles in its own way. And even as some Governments roll back reform, we also celebrate the courage of a President in Colombia who willingly stepped aside, or the promise of a new constitution in Kenya.

The common thread of progress is the principle that government is accountable to its citizens. And the diversity in this Hall makes clear — no one country has all the answers, but all of us must answer to our own people.

In all parts of the world, we see the promise of innovation to make government more open and accountable. And now we must build on that progress. And when we gather back here next year, we should bring specific commitments to promote transparency; to fight corruption; to energize civic engagement; to leverage new technology so that we strengthen the foundations of freedom in our own countries, while living up to the ideals that can light the world.

This institution can still play an indispensable role in the advance of human rights. It is time to welcome the efforts of UN Women to protect the rights of women around the world.

It is time for every Member State to open its elections to international monitors and increase the United Nations Democracy Fund. It is time to invigorate United Nations peacekeeping, so that missions have the resources necessary to succeed, and so atrocities like sexual violence are prevented and justice is enforced — because neither dignity nor democracy can thrive without basic security.

It is time to make this institution more accountable as well, because the challenges of the new century demand new ways of serving our common interests.

The world that America seeks is not one we can build on our own. For human rights to reach those who suffer the boot of oppression, we need your voices to speak out. In particular, I appeal to those nations that emerged from tyranny and inspired the world in the second half of the last century — from South Africa to South Asia; from Eastern Europe to South America. Do not stand idly by, do not be silent, when dissidents elsewhere are imprisoned and protesters are beaten, recall your own history. Because part of the price of our own freedom is standing up for the freedom of others.

That belief will guide America's leadership in this twenty-first century. It is a belief that has seen us through more than two centuries of trial, and it will see

us through the challenges we face today — be they war or recession; conflict or division.

So even as we have come through a difficult decade, I stand here before you confident in the future — a future where Iraq is governed by neither a tyrant nor a foreign Power, and Afghanistan is freed from the turmoil of war; a future where the children of Israel and Palestine can build the peace that was not possible for their parents; a world where the promise of development reaches into the prisons of poverty and disease; a future where the cloud of recession gives way to the light of renewal, and the dream of opportunity is available to all.

This future will not be easy to reach. It will not come without setbacks, nor will it be quickly claimed. But the founding of the United Nations itself is a testament to human progress. Remember, in times that were far more trying than our own, our predecessors chose the hope of unity over the ease of division and made a promise to future generations that the dignity and equality of human beings would be our common cause.

It falls to us to fulfil that promise. And though we will be met by dark forces that will test our resolve, Americans have always had cause to believe that we can choose a better history; that we need only to look outside the walls around us. For through the citizens of every conceivable ancestry who make this city their own, we see living proof that opportunity can be accessed by all, that what unites us as human beings is far greater than what divides us, and that people from every part of this world can live together in peace.

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the United States of America for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Barack Obama, President of the United States of America, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Bingu Wa Mutharika, President of the Republic of Malawi

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Bingu Wa Mutharika, President of the Republic of Malawi.

Mr. Bingu Wa Mutharika, President of the Republic of Malawi, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Bingu Wa Mutharika, President of the Republic of Malawi, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Mutharika: I am delighted to address the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly as Chairman of the African Union.

I offer my personal congratulations and those of the African Union to you, Sir, on your election as President of the United Nations General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session. I assure you, Sir, of Africa's support in your work.

I pay tribute to His Excellency Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki, President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session for his leadership during his tenure of office.

I also commend our Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for his exemplary leadership of our Organization and the excellent manner in which he continues to discharge his responsibilities. Africa is particularly grateful for his continued support of Africa's development agenda.

I am happy to say that Africa welcomes the theme for the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly that reaffirms the role of the United Nations in global governance. African leaders believe that the United Nations, with its universal membership, is well placed to build political consensus for global governance. They hold the view that the United Nations has the potential to bring about solutions to common governance problems that our global village continues to encounter, such as managing diversity and combating terrorism and conflict. I believe that now, more than ever before, the United Nations needs to strengthen its institutions to enable it to promote peace and stability and facilitate balanced growth and prosperity between developed and developing countries.

Africa also wishes to remind the United Nations not to lose sight of its commitment to fight poverty. Poverty reduction must remain the central focus of the United Nations.

As we reflect on this year's theme, the central role of the United Nations in global governance, I am fully aware that the Africa the world hears about is that of incessant calamities and natural disasters. International media report on the Africa of extreme poverty, widespread endemic diseases and human suffering. They constantly portray the Africa of civil wars, genocide, terrorism and piracy. They glorify the Africa of underdevelopment and hopelessness.

But in their reports we do not hear about the success stories of a number of African Governments. We do not hear about the successes in participatory democracy and good governance. We do not hear about the peaceful multiparty general elections. We do not hear about the high rates of macroeconomic growth in some African countries. We do not hear about the successes in food security in some of them.

That is why I now want to present another Africa to the General Assembly. It is the Africa of new hopes and new possibilities, the Africa of industrial, mineral, and agro-processing opportunities, the Africa with new job creation prospects, and the Africa that can produce enough food for all.

Yes, this is the Africa I want the Assembly to know. This is the Africa of the new beginning.

I want the world to know that we African leaders have a clear vision of a new Africa free of hunger, disease and poverty. We have the vision of a new Africa that is prosperous and full of hope. We have the vision of African nations determined to contribute more to global economic prosperity, peace and stability.

I want to inform the world that the leaders of the African Union have decided to unlock Africa's combined huge natural resources and human capital to establish new industries to create new wealth for our people. That is why this year I have chosen to address the Assembly on the subject of "Africa of the new beginning". I want the United Nations to share our belief that Africa is not a poor continent; rather, it is its people that are poor.

This year, I have come to inform this world body that Africa has decided to shift from Afro-pessimism to Afro-optimism. We are going to make Africa better.

Now, turning to global issues, I want to say that the world today faces the challenge of producing enough food to feed the over nine billion people living on this earth, and it must do this against the backdrop of rising food prices, global warming, climate change and environmental degradation. I am pleased to inform this world body that African leaders fully recognize these problems and have unanimously agreed to institute new measures to ensure that five years from now, Africa will be able to produce enough food to feed its people. They have also decided that, five years from now, no child in Africa will die of hunger or malnutrition.

In order to meet these targets, the African Union decided to turn the continent into an African food basket whose main aim is to encourage allocation of increased budgetary resources and private sector investment to agriculture and food production. For that to happen, African leaders have agreed to redesign their policy efforts to focus on three priority areas, namely, agriculture and food security, transport and energy development, and climate change. It is envisaged that effective transport structures and adequate energy supply will enhance agricultural production and food processing as well as improve human mobility and the marketing of food and agricultural products from surplus countries to deficit countries across the African continent.

The African food basket concept envisages full cooperation between Africa and Governments of the Group of Eight. The United Nations, the Food and Agriculture Organization, the World Bank, the European Union and other multilateral institutions will also cooperate in this effort.

I now want to briefly raise some issues of major concern to Africa: the adverse effects of climate change, fragile peace and security, terrorism and piracy, maternal, infant and child mortality, and slow reform of the United Nations.

African leaders recognize that climate change and environmental degradation are among the most serious global challenges that affect Africa negatively. All countries in the world share the adverse effects of climate change. All countries in the world are, to varying degrees, experiencing the adverse impacts of climate change such as severe cyclones, hurricanes, rising sea levels and water salinization, prolonged severe droughts and overall global warming.

There is enough evidence to show that most countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America are the least able and equipped to cope with those challenges.

The global nature of climate change therefore calls for an effective, immediate and appropriate international response. We need to act, and act now.

The international community has acknowledged that climate change is a real threat to humanity, and yet the performance of the major players at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen disappointed Africa and developing nations elsewhere by their intransigency. The leaders of Africa therefore would like to see the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol be urgently implemented as essential interventions to address climate change. Those conventions spell out in detail what is to be done to mitigate climate change. On behalf of Africa, I call for immediate implementation of those decisions in order to avert impending human catastrophe.

I am glad to note that maternal, infant and child health and welfare are among the underlying issues of the theme of the General Assembly this year. That calls for concerted action for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

I am pleased to say that the African Union has reaffirmed its commitments to the reduction of maternal, infant and child mortality in Africa. African Governments have undertaken to launch the four-year Campaign for Accelerated Reduction of Maternal Mortality in Africa. We also agreed to call on the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria to create a new window to fund maternal, newborn and child health. Let me, therefore, take advantage of the General Assembly to appeal on behalf of Africa to our development partners and donors to replenish the Global Fund during next month's meeting and to increase resources for maternal, newborn and child health.

Another global governance issue of major concern to Africa is the lack of movement on international trade under the Doha Round multilateral trade negotiations. Members of the United Nations agree that trade is a conduit to development in every country. Therefore we in Africa appeal for an urgent conclusion of the Doha Round, for we believe that that is essential to revive global trade and to aid in global economic recovery. Any outcome of the Doha Round negotiations must lead to clear benefits for farmers, producers, exporters and consumers in developing countries, including in Africa. Nations of the world must redouble efforts to resolve all impediments to the successful outcome of the trade negotiations.

The advancement of women and gender equality continues to be the cornerstone of the Africa of the new beginning. Women have played and continue to play a decisive role in the global, continental and national agendas for democracy, transition and development. I am happy to inform the General Assembly that African Governments have intensified the fight against gender-based violence, sexual abuse, discrimination and trafficking in women and girls. The ultimate objective is to have more coherent and meaningful interventions that will adequately increase the number of women in high decision-making positions in the advancement of growth and development.

On peace and security, I wish to underscore that the African Union considers that democracy, good governance and development cannot be sustainable without peace and security. African countries have made significant progress in ensuring that peace and security prevail on the African continent. Several countries have conducted peaceful elections, and there is growing tolerance and accommodation between the ruling and opposition parties in many countries. That is encouraging.

However, Africa has of late witnessed the re-emergence of coups d'état and other unconstitutional changes of government. The African Union has taken a strong collective decision that those negative trends will not be allowed to continue.

The African Union is also gravely concerned that Somalia has had no stable or functioning Government for a long time. That continuing volatile situation is being compounded by increasing organized piracy in the Indian Ocean. That negatively affects not only Somalia and her immediate neighbours, but the entire African continent and the rest of the world. I believe the situation calls for a new approach and new intervention. More countries should be directly involved in seeking a lasting solution to the Somalia crisis.

The situation in the Sudan presents a special challenge to the African Union and to the United Nations. Although some progress has been achieved towards the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, the African Union eagerly awaits the holding of the referendum in January 2011 and the post-referendum structure of relations in the Sudan.

One of the most immediate options in the Sudan is to consolidate the prevailing peace and stability there. The African countries are concerned that while efforts to secure lasting peace in the Sudan are ongoing, the International Criminal Court seems to push for a pound of flesh by insisting on arresting President Omer Hassan Al-Bashir. There is general consensus in Africa that that would have a negative effect, polarizing the different positions of the stakeholders and thereby driving them away from a peaceful settlement. The African Union therefore strongly appeals to the General Assembly to amend Article 16 of the Rome Statute to enable it to assume the powers of the Security Council to defer the case against President Al-Bashir for one year to allow ongoing negotiations and dialogue to succeed.

On behalf of the African Union, I wish to express appreciation for the contribution of the United Nations to the promotion of peace, security and stability in African countries. The United Nations has performed very well in many parts of Africa, including the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Sudan, Chad and West African countries. Those efforts in the search for solutions to the ongoing conflicts on the continent are highly commendable.

The sanctions against some members of the African Union and the Non-Aligned Movement have caused great economic hardship, especially to the poor and more vulnerable people in those countries. The African Union feels that the ideological justifications, if there ever were any, have outlived their time. Sanctions are also inconsistent with the emerging dialogue for the reform of the United Nations. Sanctions are also inconsistent with the obligations of United Nations Member States to promote social progress and better standards of life, as promulgated in the Preamble to the Charter of the United Nations.

The African Union therefore appeals for the immediate lifting of sanctions against the Republic of Zimbabwe and the Republic of Cuba. We believe that would enable ordinary poor Zimbabweans and Cubans to begin a life of new hope and new prospects.

As to the development of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, the African Union supports the position taken by the Non-Aligned Movement calling for justice and equal treatment for all nations concerned.

Mr. Asselborn (Luxembourg), Vice-President, took the Chair.

With regard to the reforms of the United Nations and the Security Council, the African Union believes that for the Organization to be effective in fulfilling its mandate as an honest broker, the proposed reforms must be implemented in the spirit of equity and fairness. In this regard I would like to reiterate the African Union's request for two permanent seats with full veto powers and five non-permanent seats. The African Union should also have the right to determine the selection of Africa's representatives on the Council. Once implemented, that would enable Africa to effectively participate in the global governance that the United Nations is now propagating.

In conclusion, I wish to reaffirm Africa's strong belief that a reformed United Nations and specialized agencies are likely to play a more effective role in global governance and in a more equitable global trading and financial system. I believe that the United Nations in its new governance role should support the Africa of the new beginning. A strong Africa — industrially, economically and politically — is a better trading partner for the G8 countries and the rest of the world than a weaker one. I also believe that the Africa of the new beginning with its combined vast mineral, agricultural and human resources will provide the safety valve for a boiling international monetary and financial system. Think about these things.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Malawi for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Bingu Wa Mutharika, President of the Republic of Malawi, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Ms. Laura Chinchilla Miranda, President of the Republic of Costa Rica

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Costa Rica.

Ms. Laura Chinchilla Miranda, President of the Republic of Costa Rica, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to

welcome to the United Nations Her Excellency Ms. Laura Chinchilla Miranda, President of the Republic of Costa Rica, and to invite her to address the Assembly.

President Chinchilla Miranda (*spoke in Spanish*): From this universal podium I convey a warm greeting to the Assembly and the whole of humanity. I especially commend my fellow Costa Rican citizens for their free and sovereign decision, which has given me the great honour to represent them before you all.

I begin my remarks with renewed support for the United Nations, for its contributions to human rights, peace, security, comprehensive sustainable development, tolerance, solidarity and respect for diversity and for international law. It is without doubt an organization of States, but more, it is an organization of peoples, who from their differences embrace and take shelter in the humanistic and universal values that support the United Nations.

At this moment, around the world those values and their implied commitments are flourishing, but they are also suffering.

We can congratulate ourselves on the children who are receiving a good education and on the parents who see them grow up without fear that they will be consumed by war. We are inspired by young people, workers and peasants with opportunities for a worthy life, and by the women who benefit from full equality. In that context, we welcome the appointment of Ms. Michelle Bachelet as Under-Secretary-General for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women.

However, at the same time we also are concerned about those women who as heads of households can barely feed their children. We are worried about the adults who grow old in poverty and loneliness and about children whose lives lack affection and stimulation. The catastrophic effects of climate change demand our immediate and determined attention. And it offends us that even today, there are women awaiting execution by stoning, populations stifled by brutal genocide, and nuclear weapons that are being stockpiled while granaries are being depleted.

When we refer to the United Nations and global governance, we must remember that such governance starts with good national government. But at the same time, the success of our domestic administrations depends upon an international system that is fair, efficient, open and responsible and that is capable of dealing with the great challenges of our time.

As President, I am subject to the constant scrutiny of my people, from whom I came and to whom I am accountable. I am aware that the best sermon comes from example. Thus my Government strives to represent the values, promote the development and increase the integral welfare of all Costa Ricans. We are promoting economic growth, the opening of trade, solidarity, environmental responsibility and political transparency in the framework of civil liberties. That course of action is rooted in our history. It is why we introduced free compulsory primary education in 1870, abolished the death penalty in 1877, disbanded the army in 1949, preserved 25 per cent of our land in the 1960s and created universal access to health in the mid-1970s.

My Government stands on that legacy in order to act in the present and to construct the future. We strive for attention to and early stimulation of our children and for care of adults and the elderly. We fight inequality, strive to improve education and health, and foster economic development increasingly based on clean energy, a sustainable economy and creative intelligence. I mention all these things as humble national experience, not as a pretentious global lesson.

History, geography and circumstances frequently shape us — but only up to a point, because individual and collective will, responsibility, and constructive leadership can break down the obstacles and trace better paths. Thus we must pull back the curtains of prejudice that dim reality, exchange the echoes of the past for the sounds of the future, and bury recrimination of others as an excuse to avoid our duties.

Beyond the national sphere, good governance means that there are responsibilities incumbent on all world leaders with regard to the peoples of the United Nations. The starting point must be respect for international law and multilateral organizations. For an unarmed and peaceful country such as Costa Rica, those are the main instruments for our security, the indispensable requirement for living in peace and fostering development.

Last Tuesday we celebrated, with profound personal and national conviction, the International Day of Peace, in whose creation our country played a key role. It is significant that, through the initiative of

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, its theme was "Youth for Peace and Development". That triad — youth as incentive, peace as a framework, and development as a goal — is critical to building a better world. But that triad would be truncated without freedom as opportunity, human dignity as an inescapable commitment and tolerance as a habit of coexistence.

For the countries and leaders committed to those fundamental values, the main question is how to advance them in today's world. I propose to empower even further the concepts, organisms and instruments for the promotion and protection of human rights. It is in our interest to participate constructively as members in the activities of the Human Rights Council. Here also lies our adherence to the main covenants and protocols on the subject, our insistence on the responsibility to protect civilians and our commitment to human security.

Costa Rica, besides hosting the conference that approved the American Convention on Human Rights in 1969, was the first country to ratify it. Today it is home to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. I am convinced that respect for human rights depends to a great extent upon international justice. Its most recent and innovative manifestation, thanks to the Treaty of Rome, is the International Criminal Court, for which we reaffirm our support after a decade of contributions. To use the weapons of the law actively is another unavoidable responsibility of global governance.

In the area of peace and security, Costa Rica adheres to the five points on arms control advocated by the Secretary-General. In particular, we insist on the necessity for starting negotiations for an arms transfer treaty, while at the same time progressing with the model convention for the prohibition of nuclear weapons and completing ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. The accumulation and transfer of weapons, especially nuclear, chemical and bacteriological weapons, is not only a threat to humanity's peace and survival; it is also an assault on development. Every soldier who enlists, every missile that is activated, every isotope enriched for military purposes means fewer schools and hospitals, fewer food programmes, fewer roads, fewer wireless networks, fewer seeds for farmers and fewer good judges to administer justice.

But peace must go beyond action; it should become embedded in the minds and imaginations of human beings. To educate for peace is to vaccinate against war. Thirty years ago, our country launched, and the United Nations supported, a pioneer and visionary institution for this area: the University for Peace. Today its contribution reaches every continent of the world, and our commitment to it increases day by day. For this reason we proudly celebrate its anniversary.

It is a paradox that while many countries waste resources on weapons, the international community has been incapable of dealing effectively with the scourges of drug trafficking, organized crime, terrorism, arms trafficking, and the perverted exploitation and trafficking of human beings. My country and Central America suffer increasingly from the aggressions of the drug cartels. We risk being virtually taken over by their gangs, with consequences that will go beyond our borders and become a clear threat to international security.

My Government has made its citizens' security one of its chief goals. Our people demand it, and we will never fail them. We are fighting crime with energy and determination, as well as with full respect for human rights, intelligent policies and the supremacy of law.

But the great battle against transnational crime demands much more from us all. Today drug-related activity is endangering the improvements in development achieved in Central American countries. From being merely a transit zone, due to our geographic location between the great drug producers to the south and the great consumers to the north, our countries have, to different degrees, been becoming producers, traffickers and consumers of drugs.

Today we are free of none of the manifestations of the drug trade, which has extended its tentacles into many areas of our social life. Young people in their schools and neighbourhoods see their future menaced by the easy offer of drugs, our health-care systems are almost overwhelmed by the problem of addiction, the integrity of our institutions is menaced by corruption and coercion, and violence is reaching levels never seen before.

The battle against the drug trade can be won only with coordination, global cooperation and a major revision of the strategies pursued so far, many of them incomplete or failed. From this rostrum I call on the countries with the highest rates of drug consumption to

take more effective action against this enormous problem, and to cooperate with the countries suffering from a problem we did not create. I also call urgently for global solidarity in this task, and for multilateral organizations to increase their activity by developing an agenda with more comprehensive strategies, with a better balance of resources and responsibilities, and with more focused goals. If new and good efforts are not vigorously initiated, we will soon regret our inaction.

If Costa Rica, a middle-income country, has achieved human development rates comparable to those of high-income countries, it is because, among other things, our social investment has replaced military spending. That is why we insist that international aid should not ignore the ethical dimension of development. We support preferential allocation of such aid to countries in the most precarious situations. But countries like mine that, thanks to good investments and astute political decisions, have improved our conditions of life, should benefit from innovative technical cooperation schemes, productive financing and public-private alliances. Above all, we must successfully complete the Doha Round of international trade negotiations, an essential engine for economic growth.

We must also establish peace with the environment and development. Organizing the economy in a sustainable manner in order to produce material and social well-being is a task we cannot avoid. Today we have high hopes for the next Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Cancun. We hope that all countries, but in particular the big polluters and generators of carbon emissions, will shoulder their responsibility towards humanity. In Costa Rica, we have shouldered ours by setting the goal of becoming one of the first carbon-neutral countries in the world. We are also advancing in the application and development of clean energies and the protection of our watersheds and biodiversity.

Let us not forget, however, that sustainability, above all, must be human; hence the importance of the Millennium Development Goals. Attaining them in five years' time is an unavoidable goal for this Organization.

The challenges of global governance are many, and they are overwhelming, but the possibilities to confront them exist. Their promotion is part of our responsibility as leaders. This also requires that the United Nations improve its own governance. If it does not respond to new realities and if its Member States do not help with the task, the Organization runs the risk of sinking into irrelevance. The adaptation of the United Nations to the challenges of global governance demands greater effectiveness, efficiency and transparency in its administration, its decision-making processes and its field operations.

In this universal Organization, we must also preach through example. That is why Costa Rica has strived to collaborate in an active and constructive way in the reform process. And, like many other countries, we still need the help of the world. The world needs the help of all countries. That is the only way to advance the causes of our peoples. Costa Rica modestly offers its contribution, its effort and its voice.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Costa Rica for the statement she has just made.

Ms. Laura Chinchilla Miranda, President of the Republic of Costa Rica, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Mahinda Rajapaksa, President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.

Mr. Mahinda Rajapaksa, President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Mahinda Rajapaksa, President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Rajapaksa: I have great pleasure in congratulating His Excellency Mr. Joseph Deiss on his assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session. I also take this opportunity to extend our appreciation to the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session, His Excellency

Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki, for his effective stewardship of the General Assembly.

That the United Nations is now in its sixty-fifth year serves to underline the durability of this Organization. It is an important mechanism in ensuring cooperation between States and a forum for discussion between sovereign nations. We must never underestimate the importance of this Organization, based as it is on the principle of equal treatment of countries big and small.

It is in this spirit that I address the Assembly at a crucial juncture in the history of my own country. In two months, I will be assuming office for my second term. My mandate will be very different from my last one. For my second term as President, my promise to my people is to deliver sustainable peace and prosperity to all and to ensure that terrorism will not be able to raise its ugly head again.

In 2005, I was elected by my people on a promise to rid my country of the menace of terrorism. I say that Sri Lanka is now at peace: peace that was only a dream a few years ago. Over the past year, much has been reported and much has been said regarding my country's liberation from terrorism. However, far less has been said of the suffering we had to undergo and the true nature of the enemy we have overcome.

The rapidly forgotten truth is that we had to face one of the most brutal, highly organized, well funded and most effective of terrorist organizations, one that could even spread its tentacles to other countries. Many of the atrocities of terrorism that the West has come to experience in recent times, the people of Sri Lanka were themselves the victims of for nearly 30 years, losing almost 100,000 lives, among them a President of Sri Lanka, a visionary leader of India and scores of intellectuals and politicians. The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) was an organization so brutal that even those it claimed to represent, the Tamil community of Sri Lanka, were as much victims of its terror as the rest of the population of our country. Those who observed from afar and suggested that the Sri Lankan Government should have conceded to the demands of the terrorists need to be reminded that terror is terror, whatever mask it wears and however it is packaged. To all those, I say this: My responsibility is to the entire nation. My responsibility is to the lives of millions of men, women and children, and those yet to be born. My responsibility is to the peace and prosperity of the nation and the right to a peaceful life for all who live there.

In this context, it is worth examining the capacity of current international humanitarian law to meet contemporary needs. It must be remembered that such law evolved essentially in response to conflicts waged by the forces of legally constituted States, and not terrorist groups. The asymmetrical nature of conflicts initiated by non-State actors gives rise to serious problems which need to be considered in earnest by the international community.

As we close a sad chapter in our country's history, I would like to remind the Assembly that we, along with many others, made repeated attempts to engage the LTTE in constructive dialogue. I still believe that dialogue is the best way to resolve any conflict. It is much to be regretted that all these attempts were rejected with reckless arrogance and contempt. It was in those circumstances that we were compelled to mount a humanitarian operation, with the blessing of many international friends, to neutralize acts of terrorism and restore peace and security.

The entire focus of our nation is now on building a lasting peace, healing wounds, ensuring economic prosperity and guaranteeing the right of the whole nation to live in harmony. We are mindful that in order to fulfil these aspirations, economic development and political reconciliation must go hand in hand. Towards this end, constitutional changes which appropriately reflect the aspirations of our people will be evolved with the full participation of all stakeholders.

We are pursuing a nationwide agenda of renewal. Sri Lanka has already returned over 90 per cent of the internally displaced persons to their original villages, which were previously riddled with landmines, and has provided the essential infrastructure necessary for them to resume normal life. We have helped bring back the vitality of youth to former child soldiers. We have rebuilt the eastern province and have begun the same task in the north. Sri Lanka's armed forces now have the role of delivering essential services, rebuilding homes, clearing mines and restoring vital infrastructure to whole tracts of formerly decimated land.

Despite the lingering dangers that have remained, Sri Lanka has nevertheless repealed a substantial part of the emergency regulations that were so necessary during our conflict situation and plans to repeal a good part of the remainder in the coming months.

A great deal has been said by those beyond our borders about our Tamil community. Let me be clear: no nation on Earth can wish Sri Lanka's Tamil community more good fortune than Sri Lanka itself. To the misguided few, I say do not allow yourselves to become an instrument of division, hate and violence, to be used as an enabler for hatred to be reborn in another form. Rather, come, let us join together and break the bonds of mistrust to rise to meet new horizons.

Sri Lanka recognizes the challenges we face, among the greatest of which is healing the wounds of the recent past. To that end, earlier this year, a lessons learned and reconciliation commission was established, which gives full expression to the principles of accountability. This independent commission, comprising eight Sri Lankans of eminence and stature, has already begun its work. Recently, the commission handed over to me an interim communication recommending certain administrative steps that may need to be taken in the reconciliation process.

We believe that for the rebuilding and healing of our nation to succeed, the process must evolve from within. If history has taught us one thing, it is that imposed external solutions breed resentment and ultimately fail. Ours, by contrast, is a home-grown process which reflects the culture and traditions of our people.

We certainly welcome the support of the international community as we rebuild our land and our economy. We sincerely hope that its members will be prepared to take a practical approach to developing partnerships with Sri Lanka through international trade, investment and capacity- building.

Our economy is well on the way to realizing the dividend of peace. We are experiencing steady and sustained growth, including during the last quarter, of over 8 per cent, moderate inflation and low interest rates. During the past five years, we saw our per capita income double. It is our ambition to take this further, to double yet again the present per capita income by 2016 and also to become one of the top 30 countries in which to do business by 2014.

"Mahinda Chinthana — Vision for the Future", my election manifesto, articulates my vision of having sound infrastructure at the national, provincial and rural levels, which is vital for the inclusive growth that will make development meaningful to the whole of society. I can also proudly claim that my country, through this economic strategy, is comfortably realizing the Millennium Development Goals well in advance of the target set by the United Nations. We are at present strongly focusing on putting in place the necessary public infrastructure while strengthening the enabling policy environment for the private sector to invest even more in my country.

In order to achieve the full realization of our potential, we desire a supportive external environment. To that end, we will always seek constructive engagement and partnerships. For our part, we will continue to contribute, as we have always done, to the cause of multilateralism and a principled global order. In this regard, I am happy to note that 2010 marks the fiftieth anniversary of our first contribution to a United Nations peacekeeping mission. Our armed forces and police are today combat-tested, with the capacity to carry out their duties in the most challenging of conditions.

The world as never before in the past has become severely vulnerable to natural disasters. Almost every day we see millions of people becoming victims of severe floods, landslides, volcanoes, cyclones, earthquakes and the like. It has become increasingly difficult for affected countries to manage post-disaster recovery programmes unassisted. The recent natural calamities in our region underline the crucial need for effective action in which there is collective participation to reduce human suffering. Without doubt, climate change and global warming are today issues which demand the urgent attention of all nations.

Among the political issues that have continued to fester for too long is the continued denial of the right of the Palestinian people to a State of their own within recognized and secure borders. It is the fervent hope of the people of Sri Lanka that this most tragic of situations will be resolved without delay and in a sustainable manner. We also hope that Palestine will be a Member of the Organization by this time next year.

Our guiding principle must always be that of mutual respect in international discourse, even as we disapprove of and condemn measures such as unilateral embargoes. Experience in the recent past amply demonstrates that these embargoes have an impact not on Governments, but rather on the most vulnerable sectors of the community. In the same spirit, I would call for the empathy of the international community towards the aspirations of the Cuban people.

I also wish to urge with all the emphasis at my command the need for greater concern and involvement on the part of the international community to assist the people of Africa in their efforts to raise the quality of life on their continent.

Leaders who have been chosen by their people often face difficult decisions. They must be entitled to the good will and confidence of the international community with regard to the heavy burdens they are required to shoulder. The results of their decisions must be evaluated objectively and they must be allowed to speak for themselves.

That is not to say countries should operate in isolation. In this globally interdependent world, we must work together where we can and constructively counsel each other where appropriate. The United Nations forms the bedrock of this interaction, and in that role it will always receive the support of Sri Lanka.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Mahinda Rajapaksa, President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Abdullah Gül, President of the Republic of Turkey

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Turkey.

Mr. Abdullah Gül, President of the Republic of Turkey, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Abdullah Gül, President of the Republic of Turkey, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Gül: The mission of the United Nations is to protect the dignity, security and well-being of all human beings. Therefor, peace, security, stability and general welfare constitute the tenets of Turkey's work and action in the United Nations. Since this Assembly gave us an overwhelming mandate for Turkey's non–permanent seat on the Security Council, we have worked hard, sincerely, objectively and effectively to contribute to peace, security and the welfare of the international community.

In these two years, we have tried to offer added value, in a fair and principled manner, in addressing various global and regional issues. We have sought to advance the discussions within the Council on an issue to which we have always accorded high priority: peacekeeping and peacebuilding. Indeed, this afternoon, we will be holding a Security Council summit to exchange views and ideas on this matter at the highest political level. Furthermore, next Monday, we will hold a thematic debate of the Security Council on counter-terrorism.

Terrorism is indeed a leading and most pressing challenge for the international community on the global scale. It cannot be countered without sincere, effective, cohesive and concrete international cooperation. I would like to recall that our struggle against terrorism is bound to fail unless we fight all terrorist organizations, irrespective of their supposed political, ideological, ethnic or religious aims.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is one of the risks of our contemporary world. We cannot overcome that menace unless all Member States, including nuclear States, adopt a just and principled approach to their respective policies. Establishing a credible global non-proliferation regime will not be possible if we ignore the de facto existence of nuclear weapons in certain countries at the heart of some of the world's most delicate regions.

In this context, I would like to call on all Member States to intensify their efforts to create a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, as was envisaged in Security Council resolution 687 (1991), and as has been repeatedly called for by the General Assembly. We also support the calls made in May at the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons for convening a conference on a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East in 2012. I believe that such an initial step would be a sine qua non for all non-proliferation initiatives in the rest of the world.

In responding to those security challenges, we should keep in mind that global problems cannot be solved unilaterally, bilaterally or within a small circle of like-minded nations. Therefore, it is more important

today than ever for us to adopt a multilateral approach to global problems.

One such problem is the current global economic crisis. Though we are in a slow recovery, the impact of the crisis is still being felt today. We must draw the proper lessons from it in order to avoid a recurrence of similar shocks in the future. That crisis was caused by the irresponsible acts of some financial institutions in the most developed markets. Ordinary people have paid the highest price for the mistakes of a few in developed nations. The current economic crisis revealed once again the weakness and deficiencies of the existing global and national financial and economic architectures, which lack effective governance and regulations to oversee reckless financial institutions.

The Turkish economy, however, has managed to stay on course in spite of the world economic crisis, thanks to previously undertaken comprehensive economic and financial measures. Within the Group of 20 (G-20), we strongly support the efforts of international forums aimed at restoring global growth and streamlining financial practices. We believe that the G-20 should continue to play a central role in putting together the right policies and measures to those ends.

The situation of the least developed countries has worsened in the aftermath of the global crisis. Every effort should therefore be made to integrate those countries into the global economy. In that endeavour, we should act according to the principles of free and fair trade and avoid protectionist tendencies. It is with these thoughts that we look forward to the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, to be organized next year in Istanbul.

During the past decade, Turkey's economic indicators improved, as did its development assistance. Our relatively greater means have enabled us to contribute more to the development of others. Turkey has now evolved into an emerging donor. With the contribution of Turkish-based non-governmental organizations, our overall development assistance exceeds $1.5 billion annually. Through the Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency, we allocate that amount to diverse capacity-building projects, in fields such as health, education, agriculture and infrastructure.

Developing nations are also more exposed than others to the gravest threats of four interconnected problems: global warming, climate change, epidemics and food security. In recent years, tragedy has struck many nations because of the adverse impact of climate change around the world. Some parts of our planet are experiencing severe drought, while others have been hit by devastating floods. The current plight of Pakistan is a reminder that this has become a pressing issue that calls for urgent remedial action. We must acknowledge that a sustainable environment is an indivisible global public good for humankind. We must therefore assume collective responsibility for preserving it. Billions of lives, not just today but also of future generations, will depend on the actions we take now.

The global food crisis is another urgent concern. It poses a worrying challenge to coming generations. These compelling economic, demographic, ecological and biological challenges oblige us to redefine the notion of security. Such issues no longer fall into the category of soft risks, but rather pose a clear and present threat to humankind.

In the face of such overwhelming threats, it is time to take global action within the United Nations framework. To that end, I call on Member States to explore the possibility of establishing a global rapid-reaction capability to effectively tackle natural and ecological disasters, food shortages and epidemics. This would also help to maintain international peace and security by mitigating threats that arise from weak governance, the collapse of public order and domestic or inter-State conflict over diminishing natural resources.

If we allocate a small fraction of our defence expenditures to financing and establishing a peacekeeping capability, we will have more cost-efficient results in maintaining peace and stability in the world. Moreover, if we could pool some of our defence equipment — equipment that has lost its effective utility in military terms but is still relevant for disaster-relief operations — we could swiftly improve such rapid-reaction capability. Of course, existing regional capacities could be instrumental in this global endeavour. All such resources should be channeled directly to those in need, and not eroded by excessive administrative costs.

On the political side of our agenda, there is no shortage of enduring regional issues. Because of time

constraints, I will touch only briefly on some of them here.

Permanent peace in the Middle East is the key to a peaceful and stable future for the world. Unfortunately, the absence of peace there has had serious and adverse strategic consequences for the rest of the world. Turkey has therefore always supported every effort aimed at reaching a comprehensive peace in the Middle East. In this understanding, we appreciate President Obama's efforts and welcome the direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. We hope that this new engagement can take us closer to a viable and fair settlement.

On the other hand, it will be very difficult to make progress towards permanent peace unless we put an end to the humanitarian tragedy in Gaza. In this context, the attack in May of the Israeli armed forces on the international humanitarian aid convoy on the high seas resulted in grave civilian casualties and was an unacceptable act, in clear violation of international law. In the light of international law, Turkey expects a formal apology and compensation for the aggrieved families of the victims and the injured people.

Therefore, we attach particular importance to the work of the panel of inquiry and the fact-finding mission. We are pleased to have received the report (A/HRC/15/21) of the fact-finding mission established by the United Nations Human Rights Council. The report offers a solid legal framework for establishing the facts of the incident. We also look forward to the successful completion of the work of the panel.

As for Iraq, the elections of 7 March marked a new period for the people of that country. Nevertheless, the post-election political stalemate is aggravating the security situation and hindering the launch of a comprehensive reconstruction programme. We sincerely hope that the new Government in Iraq will reflect the balance that emerged at the elections. The new Government must be inclusive, effective and democratic. In the aftermath of the withdrawal of foreign combat troops, we also urge all neighbours of Iraq to act responsibly and support the territorial integrity, political unity and sovereignty of Iraq. We must all help the Iraqi people in their quest for a better future.

Our contributions to international efforts in the search for an urgent and peaceful settlement of the Iranian nuclear issue will also continue. This controversy can be resolved only in conformity with International Atomic Energy Agency norms and obligation under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and in respect for the right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy. In this vein, the Tehran Declaration and the July gathering in Istanbul provide a window of opportunity to be seized. We believe that there is no alternative to diplomacy.

As a Balkan country, Turkey attaches cardinal priority to the peace, stability and economic development of the Balkans. In recent years, we have actively engaged in result-oriented initiatives in the Balkans by intensifying our high-level bilateral visits to Belgrade and Sarajevo. Moreover, the launching of trilateral cooperation mechanisms with Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia, on the one hand, and with Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, on the other, was of historic significance. Through these mechanisms, we are trying to create a new atmosphere of mutual understanding and cooperation among those nations. I believe that the integration of the western Balkan countries into the European and Euro-Atlantic structures would be a decisive final step for the resolution of conflicts in the region.

As for the Caucasus, we remain committed to pursuing our efforts in search of a comprehensive and sustainable peace in the region, while respecting the principle of territorial integrity. In recent years, we have all seen how frozen conflict can easily turn into active clashes in the region. Given this context, we attach particular importance to the peaceful resolution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Any failure in Afghanistan will certainly have unpredictable consequences for the international community. Therefore, Afghanistan deserves our close attention and sincere commitment. Afghanistan is going through a historic process of transformation. As military operations continue, there must be a simultaneous and growing emphasis on civilian efforts to win the hearts and minds of the Afghan people. Turkey's commitment to Afghanistan is open-ended. We will continue our assistance as long as the Afghans require it.

Supporting Pakistan's democracy is also of singular importance, not only in and of itself, but also to the stability of the region as a whole. In the wake of the terrible disaster caused by the floods, it is critically

important to support the people and the democratic Government of Pakistan in healing their wounds.

Africa is another region that requires the international community's collective responsibility and action. The burden of resolving the overwhelming problems of that continent cannot be placed on the shoulders of Africans alone. It is in this understanding that Turkey has devised a comprehensive policy that includes effective political, social and economic measures to help address the challenges that Africa faces.

On the Cyprus issue, our long-standing commitment and full support of a just and lasting settlement remains unchanged. We share the vision of the Secretary-General that a settlement will be within reach before the end of this year, but this process should not be open-ended. A positive outcome emerging from these negotiations would rapidly transform the eastern Mediterranean into a pillar of peace, stability, cooperation and welfare in the European Union.

The Turkish Cypriots have shown that they are in favour of a settlement, as clearly manifested in the 2004 referendum, but they continue to suffer unjustly from the absence of a settlement. I would like to repeat the call made by the Secretary-General to the international community to take the necessary steps to eliminate the isolation of the Turkish Cypriots and enable their integration into the greater world.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate our view that the United Nations can and should play an even larger role in chartering a better future for humankind. It is up to us, the Member States, to provide the United Nations with the necessary political support and concrete tools so that it can fulfil that role. I assure the Assembly that Turkey, for its part, will continue to lend its full support and cooperation to the United Nations in our quest to leave a much safer, more prosperous, cleaner and healthier world to our children.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Turkey for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Abdullah Gül, President of the Republic of Turkey, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, Amir of the State of Qatar

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Amir of the State of Qatar.

His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, Amir of the State of Qatar, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, Amir of the State of Qatar, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

Sheikh Al-Thani (*spoke in Arabic*): When I stood on this platform in September last year, I addressed the issue of the threats that beset our world. Unfortunately, these threats are still present and have even increased and diversified, and we are not any closer to achieving the Millennium Development Goals, which we set for ourselves ten years ago during the Millennium Summit. We believe that the malfunction that our world suffers from is due, not to a lack of resources, but to mismanagement and lack of justice and equity.

The global economic, financial and food crisis and the persistence of hunger, poverty and other challenges facing humanity today prompt us to rebuild our institutions and formulate our strategies to better respond to the challenges and crises facing the international community. The time has come to reformulate the global economic system in order for it to achieve justice and equal opportunities for all. Among the important international conferences and forums that Doha hosted this year was the World Economic Forum Global Redesign Summit, which resulted in many proposals for improving the existing international structures and cooperative arrangements, in order to create an international system conducive to meeting the challenges of the twenty-first century. I call on decision makers to discuss the proposals and adopt those that are appropriate.

You may all know that our region is still experiencing the highest degree of tension in the world. The question of Palestine has been awaiting a just solution for decades, the situation remains precarious in Somalia, Afghanistan and Iraq, and the Iranian nuclear crisis requires a solution. We have repeatedly

stressed the importance of reaching a solution through peaceful and diplomatic means, and, in our view, a fruitful, direct dialogue between the United States of America and the Islamic Republic of Iran would contribute to the resolution of this crisis.

The strategic importance of the Arabian Gulf region stems from its geostrategic position and the fact that it is sitting on half of the world's oil and natural gas reserves and is the source of one quarter of the world's production of these two primary driving forces of the global economy. Let this be yet another consideration that prompts the international community to recognize the importance of achieving political stability and security in the Middle East. This is a difficult goal that can only be achieved by renouncing the use of force, freeing the region of weapons of mass destruction, without exception, and settling bilateral disputes and regional conflicts on the basis of international law, the United Nations Charter, the resolutions of international legitimacy and the principles of justice and equity.

Israel's persistence in violating international law and humanitarian values was reflected in the acts of piracy committed against peace activists who tried to break the unjust and inhuman siege imposed on the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip. This prompts us again to call upon the international community to stand as one in demanding that Israel lift the blockade immediately and fully.

We are now at a historic juncture in the process of the settlement of the question of Palestine. For everyone should realize that the Arab countries will not accept the peace that Israel wants to impose as it pleases and outside international legitimacy. A lasting, acceptable and secure peace must guarantee the rights of the Palestinian people, especially the establishment of a Palestinian State, with Jerusalem as its capital.

For reasons some of which we can understand and some of which we fail to understand, this first decade of the twenty-first century has been blighted by the blind attack that has come to be known as the war on terrorism. Thus the fresh start of a new century has been hamstrung by a quagmire of distortions and damage, some, if not all, of which could have been avoided. We recognize the existence of certain practices that clearly fall within the scope of terrorism, but in this regard we emphasize two premises.

First, we disagree with the attribution of this so-called terrorism to the Islamic religion, because — in addition to being incorrect — that ascription is historically unjust and is refuted by evidence from recent history. In the twentieth century, including the second half thereof, unjustifiably violent actions occurred in the United States of America, Europe and Asia, but no one has characterized those acts of terrorism as American, European or Asian. Rather, those acts of violence are attributed to their underlying political, economic, social and even ideological causes, without reference to any religion, country or idea. By contrast, what we have seen and suffered in the first decade of this century — what is called the war on terror — is a phenomenon unprecedented in international politics. It has plunged us into a kind of war with no limits, end, logic or legal or moral conditions. Some of this is still happening and, although we note that the current United States Administration has discontinued the use of the term "war on terror", we are still looking forward to clearer and bolder initiatives.

The other premise that we disagree with is that we believe that even though the phenomenon of terrorism does exist it should not be addressed by waging wars. That approach has not achieved security, peace or prosperity. On the contrary, it has spread destruction everywhere, deprived millions of people of their livelihoods, spread fear, caused the displacing and killing of millions of people as well as economic and financial crises that have shaken the stability of the world, and undermined efforts aimed at dialogue among cultures.

I do not want to take up too much of the Assembly's time, but we believe that the situation in which we find ourselves after the first decade of this intriguing century should not be allowed to continue, and its corrosive ramifications should not go unchecked. What we fear is that the war on terrorism may turn into a series of financial transactions concluded with armies of mercenaries who are given free rein to kill outside of any international or human legitimacy. That is a very dangerous prospect.

In this first decade, we have faced major challenges. We should resolve that war is not the way to deal with such challenges. Rather, we should come to terms with ourselves, with this era and with its concomitant progress, and determine to turn the new decade and the decades that follow into an era in which

major challenges are addressed with more in-depth understanding and knowledge.

Proceeding from our belief that dialogue is the most effective way to resolve conflicts, we have set out to seek a resolution to several political crises in our region by promoting dialogue between the concerned parties, whether in Lebanon, Yemen, the Horn of Africa or the Sudan.

At the national level in the State of Qatar, we pursue human-centred development policies based on a holistic approach in dealing with human development. We have set ourselves the goals of modernization, reform and development in order to build a modern constitutional State of law-based institutions that guarantee citizens their freedoms, rights and responsibilities. We have taken concrete steps towards enhancing our development capabilities, including our health, educational and cultural institutions, which we hope will reach international standards, as well as enhancing national industrial enterprises to utilize natural resources in our country.

Mr. Ndong Mba (Equatorial Guinea), Vice-President, took the Chair.

God has granted our country an abundance of hydrocarbon fuel reserves. We have endeavoured to make the best use of this wealth, employ its revenues in the service of Qatari citizens and improve our various human development indicators because we, like other inhabitants of planet Earth, are anxious to address the impact of climate change. Our interest in clean energy, particularly natural gas, is on our list of priorities. And to contribute to the reduction of carbon emissions, we have developed policies that aim to benefit from clean and renewable energy sources.

Through this approach, we hope to contribute nationally, regionally and internationally to the establishment of peace, stability and security, as well as to the development that comes with them. Thus, we hope to assume our part of the collective responsibility for the common good.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Amir of the State of Qatar for the statement he has just made.

Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, Amir of the State of Qatar, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Mwai Kibaki, President of the Republic of Kenya

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Kenya.

Mr. Mwai Kibaki, President of the Republic of Kenya, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Mwai Kibaki, President of the Republic of Kenya, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Kibaki: The theme of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly, "Reaffirming the central role of the United Nations in global governance", is appropriate and timely. Today's transnational challenges, including issues of peace and security, development, human rights, the environment and health require genuine global governance that encompasses all United Nations Member States.

In this regard, Kenya fully reaffirms the central role of the United Nations in global governance, consistent with its Charter and international law. It is, therefore, imperative that the ongoing United Nations reforms be accelerated in order to ensure that this institution of multilateral engagement is representative and transparent, is accountable to its 192 members and optimally achieves the aspirations of today's world.

When I last addressed the General Assembly two years ago, I briefed this august body on the major steps taken by my country to resolve the political difficulties following our general elections in December 2007. Since then, we have made tremendous progress in implementing far-reaching reforms that will entrench democracy and secure our peace and stability. Top on the reform agenda has been the enactment of a new constitution, which was promulgated on 27 August 2010 following a successful national referendum.

The new Constitution greatly improves the structures of governance and lays a firm foundation for political stability and economic prosperity. It has created new vitality and a sense of renewal. We believe that this step will go a long way in contributing towards the pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals. It is also our hope that this historic development

will contribute to the continued consolidation of democratic governance in our region.

Ten years ago, world leaders meeting here in New York committed themselves to pursue the Millennium Development Goals in response to the world's main development challenges of poverty, ignorance and ill-health. Two thirds of the time allotted for the attainment of these Goals has lapsed. With only five years left to the targeted year 2015, the urgency of bridging the remaining gap is a reality we must now confront.

As I indicated in my statement to this Assembly three years ago, Kenya has invested significant resources in the pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals. We have recorded substantial progress in poverty reduction and education, in reducing maternal and child mortality, in the fight against HIV/AIDS and malaria, and in promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Climate change continues to hamper our development aspirations. In recognition of this challenge, my country has taken major steps to enhance environmental sustainability, such as reclaiming and protecting our five major water towers; undertaking investments in wind, solar and geothermal energy; and making comprehensive commitments to green our economy.

Despite these efforts, Kenya is facing many negative consequences of climate change. Our crop- and livestock-based agriculture, on which the vast majority of Kenyans depend, is now at the mercy of unpredictable weather patterns. It is with a deep concern, therefore, that we note the international community's inability to make headway in the critical negotiations on climate change. It is Kenya's hope that the world will recognize the urgency of concluding these negotiations in the interest of the survival of humanity. I look forward to positive outcomes from the upcoming meetings on climate change in Mexico and South Africa.

I now wish to turn to one of the major obstacles to the pursuit of peace and development, including the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals, in our subregion, namely, the continuing political instability in Somalia that is festering beyond that country.

Since the early 1990s, Kenya has borne the full weight of insecurity in Somalia. Today, as this Assembly meets, the security situation in Somalia continues to deteriorate and threaten peace and stability across the entire region and beyond. Needless to say, the threat posed by today's Somalia to international peace and security is greater than that of any other conflict in the region. Yet Somalia continues to suffer benign neglect from the international community, leading to many lost opportunities to resolve the crisis. The perceived reluctance of the Security Council to engage with Somalia has been a matter of great concern for those of us who suffer the worst consequences of the conflict. Today, I wish to draw the attention of this Assembly to yet another opportunity that should not be lost.

In July of this year, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Summit identified critical elements of engagement and took a number of decisions on the way forward. These decisions were endorsed by the African Union summit in Kampala in July 2010. Unfortunately, the support needed to implement these decisions by the international community has not been forthcoming.

It is against this background that Kenya urges the United Nations and the entire international community to seize the opportunity created by the African regional initiative and lend support to the proposed measures, which include the appointment of an eminent high-level personality for Somalia, the effective deployment of the proposed 2,000 troops, a review of the current mandate of the African Union Mission in Somalia to enhance its peace enforcement capacity, and the extension of support to the Transitional Federal Government to bolster its effectiveness countrywide.

As the Chair of the IGAD Committee on the Sudan, I have remained actively engaged with the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). I have done so because we in the IGAD region believe that the CPA holds the key to peace and stability in the Sudan and the region.

I wish to inform this Assembly that I have received assurances from both President Omer Al-Bashir and First Vice-President Salva Kiir to remain on course with respect to the preparations for the referendum. I am pleased to further inform the Assembly that both reaffirmed their commitment to resolve all the outstanding issues, to hold the

referendum on 9 January 2011, and to accept the outcome of the vote. We in the region are looking forward to the holding of a successful and peaceful referendum that promotes regional peace and stability.

These efforts by the neighbours of the Sudan and the African Union have created a momentum that is critical to the full implementation of the CPA. It is crucial that the world stand in support of these initiatives as Sudan takes vital steps in relation to its future governance. I believe that continued engagement with the leadership of both the National Congress Party and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement is the only way towards the peaceful resolution of the challenges facing the Sudan.

In view of this perspective, I wish to inform this Assembly that I will convene the second IGAD Special Summit on the Sudan in November 2010, in order to take stock of progress, ensure the process remains on course and support efforts relating to the post-referendum arrangements.

In conclusion, I wish to express my hope that through our unity, solidarity, cooperation and commitment, the challenges facing the international community will be overcome. Let us rise to the occasion and demonstrate our political will and ability to work together for the good of all humankind.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Kenya for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Mwai Kibaki, President of the Republic of Kenya, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Emomali Rahmon, President of the Republic of Tajikistan

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Tajikistan.

Mr. Emomali Rahmon, President of the Republic of Tajikistan, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Emomali Rahmon, President of the Republic of Tajikistan, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Rahmon (*spoke in Tajik: interpretation provided by the delegation*): I would like to congratulate Mr. Joseph Deiss on his election to the prestigious post of President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session and to wish him every success.

Yesterday, the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly finished its work. At the Meeting, world leaders not only reaffirmed their strong commitment to the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) laid down in the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2), but also announced specific new decisions on their practical implementation.

The leaders who demonstrated their renewed political will availed themselves of a very important and timely opportunity for accelerating the enhancement of concerted efforts at ensuring sustainable progress in the implementation of the MDGs. Further advancement in this area depends on concerted, coordinated and consistent actions by the entire international community, with the United Nations playing a central and coordinating role.

We believe that this firm commitment must be buttressed in every possible way by specific practical measures that will contribute to the full and timely achievement of all MDGs without exception. Against the backdrop of the energy and financial and economic crisis of recent years and the ever-growing impact of climate change, our actions should be supported with adequate financial resources. In this regard, the appeal to double official development assistance, an important component of financing for development, remains urgent. Allocation of additional external funds for development should not aggravate the burden of debt of developing countries whose financial situation has been exacerbated by the world economic crisis.

Strengthening the global partnership is essential if we are to provide an environment conducive to sustainable economic growth and job creation. First and foremost, it is necessary to revitalize global trade and investment, which are the driving force behind industrial growth. Such an approach is of vital importance for landlocked countries, whose participation in global trade is hampered by their geographical location and existing barriers to expanding trade relations, which, in turn, affect industrial growth and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in these countries.

Efforts should be focused on creating new international transport systems and corridors as well as promoting the efficient use of existing ones, as this will help to end the marginalization of landlocked countries in global trade.

Tajikistan advocates the speedy completion of the Doha Round of multilateral trade negotiations, which will contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Our view is that the international trade system must remain open, equitable, predictable, non-discriminatory and based on agreed rules, especially in a time of crisis.

Our current stage of development is characterized most notably by the fact that we have attained maximum quantitative growth, which must now be followed by new qualitative development. Such a transformation requires an entirely new conceptual approach to development which takes into account the interests of both the present and future generations.

Governed by the principles of sustainable economic development, the Government of Tajikistan has identified three strategic goals, namely, freeing the country from communications isolation, ensuring energy security, and ensuring food security.

In order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, my country adopted and has been implementing the National Development Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan for the period up to 2015 and the Poverty Reduction Strategy. As the country's major strategic document, the National Development Strategy identifies priorities and the principal lines of Government policy aimed at achieving sustainable economic growth, improving access of the population to basic social services and reducing poverty.

Despite enormous difficulties associated with the global financial and economic crisis and natural disasters, the aforementioned strategies have in the last five years contributed to progress in the achievement of the MDGs.

To accelerate progress towards the aforementioned strategic targets, the Government of Tajikistan intends to address sustainable macroeconomic growth issues, improve the system of government management, develop real sectors of the economy, and rehabilitate and diversify industries, as well as to strengthen the country's export capacity, improve the investment climate, support trade renewal activities, ensure social protection of the population, develop the labour market and strengthen human resources.

We need to make the transition to sustainable development in order to address such long-term issues as climate change, preservation of biodiversity and prevention of desertification. Finding solutions requires comprehensive and concerted actions. Our efforts to address global climate change need to examined critically, especially in light of last year's United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen.

The lessons drawn from that meeting should encourage us to take more resolute measures towards mitigation of harmful gas emissions, adaptation to reduce the adverse impact of climate change, and the transfer of technologies that promote transition to a low carbon economy. We are convinced that at the forthcoming meeting in Cancún the parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change will be able to agree upon those and other dimensions of a new global agreement that will become an important milestone in the post-Kyoto period.

It is known that climate change affects freshwater resources and increases the probability of floods, mudflows, landslides, droughts and other water-related natural disasters. Furthermore, climate change aggravates an acute scarcity of freshwater in certain regions of our planet. For example, in Tajikistan, which is the source of about 60 per cent of the water resources for the entire region, during the last 30 years over a thousand glaciers disappeared, out of a total of 13,000. I will add that Tajikistan's share of gas emissions is very low. All the electricity in Tajikistan is generated by hydropower stations.

The depletion of groundwater in the world remains a serious problem. According to the available forecast, by 2025 more than one third of the Earth's population will experience water shortages, and by 2050 the planet will not be able to fully meet its water needs.

Tajikistan, as the initiator of the International Year of Freshwater 2003 and the International Decade for Action, "Water for Life", 2005 to 2015, actively promotes the water agenda in the United Nations. We act not only as the initiator of discussions on water issues in the international arena but also as the initiator

in adapting specific measures on the sustainable use of this vital resource. All these steps are aimed at an in-depth study of water issues and the development of relevant coordinated actions by the international community.

In that context, the high-level international conference on the midterm comprehensive review of the implementation of the International Decade for Action, held in Dushanbe and organized in cooperation with the United Nations and in compliance with the General Assembly resolution 64/198, has made an important contribution. The conference confirmed once again that further strategies for water use, irrespective of the level at which they are developed, should be based on the principles of sustainable management of freshwater resources. The universal introduction of sustainable development is important for achieving progress in all fields of economic growth and the strengthening of human potential. Those and other recommendations are highlighted in the Dushanbe Declaration on Water (A/65/88, annex), the outcome document of the conference.

The efforts of Tajikistan in matters of water are aimed at the sustainable and efficient use of the country's potential and at strengthening mutually advantageous and equitable regional cooperation. We believe that water cooperation should strengthen rather than undermine interaction in other areas. It should increasingly build confidence among all water users and contribute to the introduction of integrated management of water resources at the local, national and regional levels.

With that in mind, we proposed proclaiming the year 2012 as the International Year of Water Diplomacy. We are convinced that the adoption of a relevant resolution by the General Assembly will contribute to overcoming competing interests in the management of freshwater resources through such diplomatic means as early warning, preventive diplomacy and confidence-building measures, mutually advantageous and mutually acceptable regional cooperation, and a dialogue on these issues.

A worldwide move towards the development and use of renewable energy, which considerably reduces harmful gas emissions, is an important component of efforts to address climate change. It is essential to encourage and support in every possible way projects aimed at increasing the proportion of renewable energy used globally, the transfer of new and advanced technologies and enhancing the efficiency of energy supply and energy conservation.

Tajikistan fully supports the initiative on ensuring universal access to advanced energy services and considers it a prerequisite for the successful achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. For this reason, Tajikistan has been developing its energy potential in a consistent and planned manner on the basis of the integrated development of renewable energy sources. Alongside the construction of small and medium-scale hydropower stations, we are considering the implementation of large-scale projects of regional significance and exploring the possibility of using solar and wind energy.

Effective regional cooperation plays a significant role in establishing a global partnership for sustainable development. The specific feature of our region is that development of comprehensive cooperation depends in many respects on the success of the process of strengthening peace and overall stability in Afghanistan.

Counteracting terrorism is a long-term objective because of the multifaceted nature of this phenomenon, which is alien to humanity, and because of its deep roots. It is essential to intensify the concerted struggle for uprooting terrorism by applying the entire range of political, economic, financial and humanitarian measures. We consider it important to speed up the agreement on and adoption of a comprehensive convention on combating international terrorism.

While combating terrorism, one should take into account that terrorism cannot exist without financial and logistical support. It is no secret that today illegal drug trafficking has become one of the major sources of financing for international terrorism. The urgency and magnitude of problems related to drugs and illicit drug trafficking are clear evidence of the global menace that threatens international stability and security at large.

Currently, Tajikistan finds itself between the major world producer of opium and heroin and the countries that consume those drugs. Given that our border with Afghanistan, with a very complex mountain terrain, is almost 1,500 kilometres long, we have to act as a buffer blocking the ever-increasing flow of this "white death".

We are absolutely confident that the success in combating narcotics aggression, which yields multimillion-dollar profits to the countries far from Tajikistan, can be achieved only through consolidated and collective efforts. We consider it necessary to get Afghanistan involved in the processes of multifaceted regional cooperation.

In that regard, I would like to underline the efforts by the Quadripartite Group — comprising Afghanistan, Pakistan, Russia and Tajikistan — which is gaining in strength. Within that new format of multilateral cooperation our efforts are aimed at counteracting the terrorist and narcotics threats, which are difficult to uproot unless the problems of poverty, unemployment and other urgent social issues are dealt with. All those efforts will help to strengthen specific global measures to reinforce the peace process. We hope that objectives and goals recently voiced at the Kabul Conference will be put into practice.

Intellectual and creative efforts over recent decades have brought about new principles and norms for sustainable development, set out in Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. Those historic documents laid down a sound foundation for transition from existing patterns of production and consumption to a sustainable pattern — the paradigm of today.

The whole range of long-term objectives that we confront today demands a clear and sound reconsideration of the actions by the international community in favour of sustainable development. We are convinced that the United Nations should remain the centre for coordination and harmonization of the efforts in this area. At the same time the consolidating role of the United Nations itself should be enhanced by strengthening its capacity to respond to problems in an efficient and appropriate way and to efficiently meet numerous global challenges and the threats of the new millennium. Tajikistan confirms its willingness and commitment to contribute to this process as far as it can.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Tajikistan for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Emomali Rahmon, President of the Republic of Tajikistan, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Alan García Pérez, President of the Republic of Peru

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Peru.

Mr. Alan García Pérez, President of the Republic of Peru, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Alan García Pérez, President of the Republic of Peru, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President García Pérez (*spoke in Spanish*): This is the second time in 25 years that I have come to this podium as head of State of Peru to address the representatives of all the countries of the world.

First of all, I would like to begin by congratulating the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session. Peru will constructively support his actions because we are sure that his experience will help us to achieve the results we hope for.

The first decade of this century has already been marked by the bloody attack of 11 September 2001 and again by the greatest economic crisis of the last 80 years. That shows that we face enormous challenges that know no borders and require a joint, united response from the entire international community. Hence, in this most important forum on our globe, Peru reaffirms its resolve to cooperate with the United Nations and other States to tackle the challenges of climate change, terrorism, extreme poverty, the economic crisis, drug trafficking, weaponization and xenophobia, which is rearing its head again.

For Latin America, the first decade of the twenty-first century has also meant confronting a choice between two different models of social and economic development.

The first is social democracy exercised through institutions. This is a democracy that recognizes market policy and that attracts global investment with clear rules, but which also has public policies for

productive infrastructure. This is a democracy that does not just wait for a trickle-down effect to reach the poorest, but neither does it resort to the facile approach of subsidizing everything or raising wages in the public sector. This is a democracy that is open to the world and that acknowledges the immense power of cybernetics and communications and that, therefore, embraces a global market policy and aims to reach outward in the world through fairly negotiated free-trade treaties that preserve the rights of workers and the environment. But this is also a democracy of education, teaching people that the path to development is one of effort and of individual and collective merit.

In the face of that model of social democracy, another path was proposed in America at dawn of the twenty-first century. That was a model of State ownership, advocated by countries with great natural resources, who trust their development to administer their resources and reject global investment. That model aims to control the political direction of the economy and rejects global reality. It suggests growing the domestic market, administering international trade by State authority, using subsidies and wages in the public sector instead of promoting productive infrastructure and assuring the peoples' future. Moreover, instead of affirming democratic institutions, this alternative path affirms the politic will and personal agenda of leaders, which always culminate in an aggressive downward spiral, destroying freedom of the press and expression and taking people down the path of weaponization.

That second path does not seem to us a responsible one, because it avoids reality and offers no sustainable solution to social problems, nor does it create jobs that people need, because poverty cannot be diminished and true employment created without modern technology and integration into the global economy. Therefore Peru opts for a realistic and global approach.

After four years, I am proud to share the progress and successes that we have achieved in our social agenda and in the Millennium Development Goals that the United Nations has put forward. I can say that Peru is today a more stable, independent and egalitarian country than it was years ago; and all this means that we are better able to contribute to the defence of world freedom and democracy and to play a stronger role in fostering regional and international peace and stability.

Peru has been one of the proving grounds for realistic, global development, for modern, democratic development that follows a global markets policy for sustained development while pursuing social policies that ensure increasing stability and equity for our citizens. In the past five years we have achieved annual growth of 6.5 per cent, and even in the year of the great crisis we maintained employment growth and poverty reduction. All the forecasts for this year indicate economic growth of 8 per cent, which will enable us to reduce further the poverty that still exists in our country.

We have given priority to public spending on infrastructure projects in the areas of health, education, water and sanitation, electrification of thousands of towns and roads, in accordance with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) established by the Assembly.

As a middle-income country, over the past four years Peru has achieved an annual rate of public investment of 6 per cent of output, double previous rates, and has invested $24 billion in more than 130,000 specific projects aimed at raising the living standards of our poorest populations and improve their participation in the economy. However, besides public efforts, and thanks to the stability of our economy and to the rules we follow, the private sector has invested and reinvested $72 billion over four years, creating 2.1 million new jobs. All international projections indicate that we will continue to grow at an annual rate of 6 per cent for the next six years, since we are already assured of $38 billion in investments to be made, in addition to investments in the agricultural and manufacturing sectors.

Peru has succeeded in reducing its poverty rate from 48 to 34 per cent of the population, and we shall reach our goal of lowering it to 30 per cent next year. We feel sure that when Peru celebrates the bicentenary of its independence, in 2021, the rate will have fallen to 10 per cent.

As I remarked yesterday at the High-level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals (see A/65/PV.9), Peru has achieved many of the MDGs ahead of schedule and will continue to work to meet all the goals of poverty reduction, improved nutrition, literacy, health and education, among others, which are the true objectives that every good Government must aim for. Suffice it to say that our

infant mortality rate has already been cut to half of what it was at the beginning of the MDG period, and by a third compared with five years ago.

All this has been achieved thanks to a stable economic policy and an increase in basic services and employment. Moreover, our currency reserves have tripled in the last five years and now stand at $42 billion. Peru's financial system is one of the most sound in the world, without debt or credit exposure that might put it at risk. But the most important thing is that the political discourse of politicians that constitutes an essential element in driving and guiding our countries has consistently advocated democracy and investment, and has been fully in line with a broad path of expanded trade and global investment. I believe that it is this alignment that has granted us the results that we can illustrate today.

As opposed to this, some countries in the Americas which chose the second route — that of State ownership, political management of the economy, inward-looking growth and State administration of trade or confrontation rather than productive cooperation with other countries of the world — cannot show similar results. Thus, we can now say that Peru has laboured on the progressive path of history in moving towards the purposes of the United Nations. Moreover, the crisis has shown us that the free market does not mean an absent State, and that we who govern must not wait for wealth to expand without knowing when and how to steer it in order to benefit those who need it most.

Besides doubling our exports over four years and tripling our reserves, we have also signed trade agreements with most of the world's countries — the United States, China, the European Union, Canada, Korea and many others — providing us with the necessary base to maintain and drive growth and improve our competitiveness, thus providing jobs for the people. In this way Peru will be greater and will be able to better contribute to international cooperation — and cooperation, along with maintaining peace, is the great purpose of our Organization.

We are aware, however, that we live in a multipolar and interdependent system, and that none of Peru's achievements will be sustainable in the long term unless we unite our efforts to combat common threats. Peace, security and cooperation are inseparable parts of globalization, and we must promote them through coordinated strategies.

Twenty-five years ago I spoke from this rostrum for the first time, and I see that, 20 years after the end of the cold war, we have still not built the stability that is a new multilateralism, based on the power of international law. We are still in a situation of uncertainty, where instability encroaches on peace and new threats arise, testing the agility, creativity and political determination of this Organization and the countries it comprises.

Peru believes that in this globalized world, security is the result of the interaction of internal and external factors. We are thus deeply concerned about the proliferation of nuclear arms, which must be halted at all costs. There is also, however, the issue of conventional weapons, since in practice it is they that produce the death and destruction suffered in many parts of the world. Moreover, arms and the arms trade limit social development, foster poverty and inequality and feed the threat of instability. Peru has therefore proposed to all countries of South America, the adoption of a protocol on peace, security and cooperation to bring about permanent peace and reduced arms expenditures.

In our view — and this has been said a thousand times here — it is not possible that, since the establishment of the integrated, reliable Union of South American Nations, its 10 member countries have invested $25 billion in new weapons and spent another $150 billion on maintaining military operating expenditures. This is shameful, because with that sum, more than 50 million people in South America could have ceased to live in poverty. Over the next five years, if we do not halt this absurd arms race, we will have spent another $35 billion on new weapons and $200 billion on regular military expenditure, thus fueling an irrational race which will always find justification to continue.

But the absurdity we see in South America is even more serious on the global scale. It is not possible for our countries to continue to allocate so much money to the buying of weapons when there are so many poor people in the world. It is as though the cold war had not ended and was continuing to the benefit of arms traders.

We say once again, as we did in the Union of South American Nations and the Organization of

American States, and as we say in all international forums in which we participate, let us allocate less to the buying of weapons and more to combating poverty. Let us raise the flag of the martyr of pacifism Jean Jaurès or our great friend, the Olof Palme of Sweden.

Let us demand that multilateral financial institutions include anti-armament clauses in their contracts and conditions, just as they do environmental provisions. Why should they lend belonging to all the citizens of the world to countries that use them in a race to death? It is a serious matter to produce and consume harmful drugs, but it is also a serious matter for the richest countries of the world to produce weapons for poor countries to buy, curbing their development and road towards justice. We appeal to the leaders of the world: stop buying and producing arms; feed the disadvantaged; develop land; and create employment.

Real strength, real leadership of nations and peoples is found in intelligence and the ability to help the least developed, not in the capacity for arms production or its nuclear power. We know it is difficult to make this appeal over and over again, but we shall keep doing it because one day clarity and acceptance of these ideas will prevail among world opinion and among the world's peoples.

For all those reasons, we call for this world forum to act. It is important for us also to think of regional integration, because we are not a cluster of asteroids. But we believe in a modern, different integration. In this world of computers, satellite communication, trade without borders and human rights without national restrictions, this new integration does not mean just joining those who are already geographically joined, but also using the tools of technology to ensure that the furthest off are also integrated. This is the new space of freedom that science and technology are creating for human beings and nations.

We must get beyond the primitive idea that there is not enough to go around and realize that when the wealth of information is distributed, those who distribute it are no poorer for having done so. Rather, they have lost nothing by sharing with others. Similarly, integration is a form of wealth which sooner or later will reach all united peoples.

Here, I can provide a fine example of the path followed by Ecuador and Peru after two centuries of confrontation, hatred and war. Thanks to the determination and political will of the Government of Ecuador headed by President Rafeal Correa, and its agreement with the Peruvian Government, we have taken a quantum leap forward in fraternity, integration and development.

Barely 15 years ago, we were divided by war, but now we have a permanent joint binational Cabinet thanks to which we have built bridges and thousands of kilometres of roads, improved our agricultural systems and integrated our social security systems for workers in our two countries. We have binational consulates and embassies, representing both our countries in many parts of the world. Ours is an example we would like to show to the United Nations as proof of our genuine and active devotion to integration; we believe in integration and in fraternity among peoples.

The need for greater integration was tested when the worst international crisis of the past 80 years broke out. This financial crisis, which began in developing countries, has had consequences that we still cannot predict. Our understanding of this crisis is the following: the beginning of globalization and the increase in world trade were possible only with the new information and communications technologies which, at the infrastructure level, have developed new forms of production and policy.

Information is now the fundamental fuel driving the economy and political change. It is gradually displacing fossil fuels as the essential form of energy. So we see the structure of world trade becoming increasingly dematerialized, but information and communication, by means of e-money and computers, are able to work at such speeds that they have outstripped the human capacity of our banks, our financial wizards and existing institutions to manage the new economy.

This is the dawn of a new, much swifter, digitalized economy in crisis. But if this speed brings crisis and chaos, the same speed of technology will also bring solutions to problems engendered by the crisis. We must trust in human beings and their creative abilities. Never in human history have we had so many means of payment and so much capacity to consume; never have we had so much technological creation and transformation; never have we had such an interactive digital market that allows people, even the poorest, from their homes to instantly stimulate production in other parts of the world.

This enables us to look with human optimism to the future of the world and to believe that after a slight rise in inflation in 2012, which will come about because of the expansion of the means of payment to overcome the crisis, world trade will accelerate and help us emerge from the present circumstances.

However, we must be prepared for this greater speed brought about by digitalization and by creativity. We must strengthen our peoples' and communities' ability to integrate, strengthen exchanges among our countries through transportation, communications and electronic interconnection, strengthen education and eradicate weaponization.

Our message is one of optimism about the world situation. Despite ourselves, we are building a better world, without borders, without tyranny, with more freedom. We must act, employing policies which are successful against the crisis. We must employ democracy, sound institutions and realism, using capital and international technology and mobilizing investment in small and micro businesses.

Of course, our response to the crisis must always be a collective one. The Group of 20 (G-20) is now the prime forum of international financial cooperation and coordination, and we must support its role to support its role in reforming the system. We need a greater regulation given the growing speed with which financial and economic instruments can be manipulated. Peru commends the efforts that have been made, but proposes that the work of the G-20 gain in legitimacy by establishing fluid lines of communication with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, and by involving other countries in this work.

But just as in the financial crisis, all nations must coordinate our efforts to properly confront terrorism, drugs, the illicit arms trade, money laundering, trafficking of persons, xenophobia and climate change.

With respect to this last theme, I must note that Peru is vulnerable to the environment and is at very serious risk due to climate change. But at the same time, my country is strategically placed to mitigate and adapt to the effects of global climate change because it ranks fourth in terms of the quantities of tropical forests.

We want to change our discourse. We have not come with hand extended to demand cooperation from the rich of the world but to demand that they fulfil their commitments in their own countries. We have come to say that we will do the same in our own countries.

In Peru, our forest sequesters 21 billion tons of carbon per year. We have 84 biospheres and are one of 17 megadiverse countries on the planet.

I offer — if necessary, with hand extended to the insensitive world of the rich countries — our budgetary and humane commitment to protect, unscathed, Peru's 54 million hectares of forest, thus controlling climate change at the global level. As a tropical glacier country in danger, we appeal to the world to implement specific goals for cooperation and technology transfer and to provide resources to develop programmes to combat the effects of climate change.

We want an agreement that is comprehensive, binding, fast and effective, and I reiterate to the Assembly my country's desire to strengthen joint action through development of a clean and sustainable growth economy with low carbon emissions. With that intention we will voluntarily reduce to zero the deforestation of the primordial natural forests and will alter our present energy matrix so that by 2021 renewable non-conventional energy, hydropower and biofuels will account for at least 40 per cent of the energy consumed in the country. And we will make annual reports to the Assembly.

However, we must not forget that much of the pollution is still produced by poverty. Hundreds of millions of households in the world continue to use wood-burning stoves, thus driving deforestation and at the same time polluting the environment and causing serious bronchiopulmonary and nutritional problems among children. We propose to reduce the number of wood-burning stoves in Peru by 20 per cent by 2021 and to replace them with better stoves, and we want that issue to become part of the Millennium Goals.

A final point is something of particular interest to Peru — the situation of migrants. The globalization of capital, services and products cannot be accepted without also accepting the free movement of people or facilitating their mobility. Peru actively promotes the defense of the human rights of migrants and their families, because it is a country built by European migrants, as is the United States and many other rich countries today — which they forget when they expel today's migrants and deport them by plane.

Peru believes that migration is a development tool that has enriched and continues to enrich universal culture and the social life of countries. That is why we condemn any type of regulation, whether in Arizona or elsewhere, or any kind of xenophobic or discriminatory expressions. It is a paradox that the countries governed by the children of migrants are today those that most vigorously deport migrants, unwittingly creating a new form of domestic violence that could have very serious consequences in the short term.

We reiterate that the best way to avoid unregulated migration is by means of unhampered free trade and investment from the most developed countries that helps to generate employment and improve the quality of life of people in the developing countries.

Peru has an ongoing commitment with the United Nations, a commitment with humankind without races, colours or distinctions. We would like, as we proposed a few years ago, to strengthen the entire system in order to consolidate ourselves as a modern, strong and free organization, free of the contradictions or delays of the past, one that can ensure peace with less bureaucracy and with greater resolve and stronger political fortitude.

Let there be peace and well-being for all peoples of the Earth; let there be bread with freedom for all human beings.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Peru for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Alan García Pérez, President of the Republic of Peru, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Viktor Yanukovych, President of Ukraine

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of Ukraine.

Mr. Viktor Yanukovych, President of Ukraine, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Viktor Yanukovych, President of Ukraine, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Yanukovych (*spoke in Ukrainian; English text provided by the delegation*): On behalf of Ukraine, I sincerely congratulate His Excellency Mr. Joseph Deiss on his election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session. I am convinced that his rich experience will contribute to the achievement of significant results in our joint work.

We have started our work in New York on a high note. The Millennium Development Goals summit has just successfully concluded. The summit outcome document (resolution 65/1), the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2) and the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1) have become our road map for sustainable development and a better future. Their rigorous and coherent implementation is a common task for all Member States. Ukraine is ready to work actively to this end.

Ukraine approaches with full responsibility the issues of poverty eradication, providing high-quality education, developing proper conditions for preserving the environment, improving maternal health and reducing child mortality, curbing HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis, and ensuring gender equality. Our achievements as well as the problems we face are set out in the national report on implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, which we presented at the summit.

Today my country is undergoing profound internal changes. We have finally achieved political stability and have launched comprehensive economic and social reforms. In short, Ukraine has been given a new progressive impetus, allowing us to take real practical steps towards transformations that are long overdue. I am confident that it will enable us to participate more actively in the implementation of the principles of the United Nations, to which Ukraine has been committed all along.

The world economic crisis has become a major problem that has slowed progress in Ukraine as well as in other countries. Global challenges require a global response. The world must develop a new financial and economic system of relations. Further trade liberalization, prevention of protectionist measures, new solutions and transparent tools for safeguarding global competition can contribute to the economic recovery.

We believe it is necessary to support further global processes that expand the free movement of

people, goods, services and capital. New free-trade areas and visa-free travel regimes are an important component of the appropriate response to the global challenges of today.

We all know that sustainable development is impossible without security and that security is impossible without development. Ukraine has always been an active contributor to peace and security worldwide. I believe that our contribution in that regard is beyond doubt.

This year Ukraine declared its non-bloc status. That helped to significantly reduce tension in the region and to establish a zone of stability and strategic balance around Ukraine.

In 1994 we were the first in the world to voluntarily give up our nuclear arsenal, the third most powerful in the world. Sixteen years have passed, but that decision by Ukraine has not diminished in importance. In April of this year, Ukraine took the next step at the Nuclear Security Summit, held in Washington, D. C., by announcing its decision to get rid of all its stocks of highly enriched uranium.

The experience of recent decades shows that nuclear weapons do not always increase security. Moreover, countries that try to acquire nuclear weapons may be exposed to the impact of new risks and become more vulnerable. The best way to counter the proliferation of nuclear weapons is to gradually eliminate them completely. We welcome the signing of a new START treaty between the United States and Russia and further reductions of their national nuclear arsenals.

Today there is also an urgent need for concrete steps to reduce the risks related to the proliferation of nuclear materials and technology. We encourage all Member States to follow our example in the area of global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

In view of the steps I have just mentioned, Ukraine hopes to see our international partners unswervingly comply with their obligations concerning security guarantees for my country, that is, primarily, the Budapest Memorandum of 1994. Ukraine insists that security guarantees for States that have disposed of their nuclear arsenals and for countries that do not belong to any military alliance should be reflected in a legally binding international instrument. That is the best way to discourage regional nuclear ambitions.

The principles of peaceful coexistence, respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Member States, good neighbourly relations and equality have always been the cornerstone of Ukraine's foreign policy. We believe that the spirit and letter of the United Nations Charter are the foundation for any regional agreements and arrangements in the area of security architecture. Yet our Organization can make greater use of the potential of existing regional security mechanisms so as to strengthen global security.

We have never distinguished between our own woes and those of others. From the very first years of its independence, Ukraine has actively participated in United Nations efforts to maintain international peace and security. We strongly support the strengthening of United Nations peacekeeping capabilities. Ukraine also intends to keep working to improve legal protection for the Blue Helmets. We welcome support for our initiatives by the Member States.

In our opinion, we also need to develop mechanisms to respond to new or changing challenges to international peace and security. One of these is piracy and armed robbery at sea. I am convinced that that threat can no longer be underestimated. Without effective and decisive intervention by the international community, that evil will only gain force. The United Nations should play a key role in the fight against maritime piracy. Ukraine is determined to continue its efforts to increase international maritime security and the protection of sailors' social rights, and we call upon all Member States to cooperate to that end.

Today, humanity is increasingly confronted with so-called soft security challenges. The word "soft" should not mislead us, though. Climate change constitutes a global threat to the very future of mankind. The experts are saying today that some of those changes are irreversible. That is why the international community should immediately make all possible efforts to avoid the worst-case scenario. The political will of all Member States should be mobilized. By signing the Copenhagen Accord, Ukraine has taken a step in that direction.

The Earth is our common ship, and it should not become a Titanic. We believe there should be an effective international mechanism to protect the environment of the Earth as our only planet. The world needs a standing global environmental organization with universal membership.

Against the backdrop of environmental, financial, economic and energy challenges, the peaceful use of nuclear energy is becoming increasingly crucial. States that possess nuclear technologies bear a huge responsibility towards their own people, their neighbours and all mankind.

Next year, the world will commemorate a sad date — the twenty-fifth anniversary of the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant. That tragedy is still an open wound for us. Overcoming its consequences remains a serious challenge for the international community, as the scale of the problem requires a coordinated effort involving all of our international partners.

Ukraine plans to host a high-level international conference on the theme "Twenty-five years after the Chernobyl disaster: security for the future". We intend to hold it in Kiev in April 2011, with United Nations participation. The forum should assess the progress made in the restoration and normalization of life in the affected regions and discuss nuclear safety issues. I invite all Members to take part in the conference.

Today's world is changing at an ever-increasing pace, and our Organization has to change along with it. The United Nations should be not an observer but an architect of events. For that to happen, it urgently needs to undergo comprehensive reform. Ukraine welcomes the progress we see in the organizational consolidation of the United Nations, in particular in the areas of gender equality, protection of women's rights and peacebuilding.

However, far-reaching changes are impossible without modernization of the core of the United Nations: the Security Council. The transformation of the Security Council into an entity that is more representative and balanced in composition, with improved working methods and higher transparency, is an essential precondition for increasing its effectiveness and for adapting the United Nations to the world's current practices and procedures.

Ukraine stands ready to discuss all progressive concepts relating to Security Council reform. We believe that the key to success is to take into account the interests of all the underrepresented regional groups, including the Eastern European States. I would like to take this opportunity to confirm Ukraine's intention to obtain membership in the Security Council for the period of 2016-2017.

I am confident that the work of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly session will be an important step on the road towards a peaceful, safe and prosperous world — a world of freedom, democracy and effective international cooperation. To achieve those ends, we have strong political will, a clear understanding of the challenges and a common vision of the problems. I believe in our success.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of Ukraine for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Viktor Yanukovych, President of Ukraine, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Agenda item 8 (continued)

General debate

Address by Mr. Wen Jiabao, Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China.

Mr. Wen Jiabao, Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Wen Jiabao, Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Wen Jiabao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China is a member of the big family of the United Nations, and China's development and changes have attracted worldwide attention. I wish to take this opportunity to share with the Assembly my observations on how one should get to know the real China.

Since the founding of the People's Republic, and especially since the start of reform and opening up more than 30 years ago, profound changes have taken place in China, a big, ancient country in the East. Its economic and overall national strength has substantially increased. The lives of its people have markedly improved. Its social and cultural programmes have made considerable progress, and its exchanges and cooperation with the outside world have continued to expand. In sum, my country has made an historic leap from mere subsistence to moderate prosperity.

We in China are proud of our achievements, which were made through strenuous efforts. At the same time, we are clear-headed about our place and role in today's world.

China's gross domestic product is the third largest in the world, but in per capita terms it is only one tenth of that of developed countries. China has enjoyed more than 30 years of rapid growth, but its further development faces energy, resources and environmental constraints. It is a leading producer of many important products, but it remains at the lower end of the global industrial chain. China is a big trading nation, but its exports are low in technology content and value added. In many cases, we have to rely on imports to meet the demand for core technologies.

China's coastal areas and some of the large and medium-sized cities are thriving after modernizing, but many places in the central and western regions and the vast rural areas are still rather backward. Moreover, we have 150 million people living below the poverty line set by the United Nations.

The life of the Chinese people has improved significantly, but we do not yet have a full-fledged social security system. Moreover, we are confronted with high employment pressure. Our people are more and more actively engaged in the country's social and political development, and citizens' basic rights and interests are better protected, yet our democracy and legal system still have room for improvement and such social ills as inequity and corruption still exist.

China has come a long way in modernization. It is fairly advanced in some areas of development but remains backward in others. And it faces unprecedented challenges brought by problems both old and new.

Taken as a whole, China is still in the primary stage of socialism and remains a developing country. Those are our basic national conditions. That is the real China.

China has set the strategic goal of achieving modernization by the middle of this century. As they look to the coming decades, the Chinese people will continue to advance along the path of reform, opening up and peaceful development. That path has changed China's destiny and has benefited people throughout the country. We must stay on that path and make further improvements. There is no reason whatsoever for us to deviate from it.

China will continue to focus on developing the economy. Development is our top priority, as it constitutes the basis for addressing all issues. We will rely mainly on our own efforts in pursuing development.

As China's industrialization and urbanization progress, hundreds of millions of farmers will move to towns and cities, which will create more domestic demand than ever, open up broad market and development space and serve as a powerful engine for sustaining the growth of the Chinese economy as well as the world economy at large. We will work hard to transform the economic development pattern, restructure the economy and set out on a path of balanced and sustainable development.

China will continue to deepen institutional reform. We will make consistent efforts to improve the socialist market economy. We will unswervingly strengthen and develop the public sector side of the economy and also unswervingly encourage, support and guide the development of the non-public sector. We will pay greater attention to ensuring and improving people's well-being. We will further reform the income distribution system and improve the social security system, including old-age support, medical care and unemployment benefit programmes. We will endeavour to narrow the gap between urban and rural areas, between different regions and between the rich and the poor. We want to ensure that each and every citizen shares the benefit of China's reform, opening up and development.

While deepening economic restructuring, we will also push forward with political restructuring. Otherwise, we cannot achieve the ultimate goal of economic reform and we will lose what we have gained from our modernization drive. We respect and protect human rights, uphold social equity and justice and strive to achieve free and all-around development for our people. That is the important hallmark of a democratic country under the rule of law and a basic guarantee for any country's lasting peace and stability.

China will be even more open to the world. Mutually beneficial cooperation for win-win progress is a long-term strategy that we will stick to in opening up to the world. We will follow established international rules in expanding business ties with

other countries. We will continue to improve the environment for foreign investors, optimize the structure of foreign capital utilization and explore new ways for overseas investment and cooperation.

We are committed to promoting the establishment of a fair, equitable, inclusive and well-managed new international financial order and an open and free international trading regime. We are against protectionism in all its manifestations. In the course of modernization, we will not only continue to bring in and utilize advanced achievements from the rest of the world in the economic, scientific and technological fields, but also boldly draw upon the achievements of human civilization in the fields of social management and cultural development.

China will continue to develop education, science and technology. How can China narrow the development gap with the advanced countries and enhance the sustainability of its strong growth? I believe two things are of fundamental importance: first is education, and second is science and technology. China has formulated medium- and long-term development programmes on education and on science and technology. Going forward, we will focus our efforts on implementing those two programmes and building China into a country strong in human resources and innovation by 2020.

China will continue to carry forward its fine culture. The development of a country and rejuvenation of a nation require not only great economic strength, but, more importantly, great cultural strength. The moral values and wisdom drawn from the 5,000-year-old Chinese civilization do not belong to China alone but also to the world. We will vigorously develop cultural programmes and accelerate the development of a moral and ethical code that is commensurate with our socialist modernization drive and consistent with the traditional virtues of our nation.

We respect the diversity of civilizations and will increase dialogue and exchanges with other civilizations to forge a common cultural bond for humanity. The Chinese nation, which has created an economic miracle, will create a new cultural splendor as well.

The world of the twenty-first century is far from tranquil, but gone are the days when problems were ultimately settled by war. Peace and development remain the defining features of our time.

China will stay firmly committed to peaceful development. One may ask what the essence of peaceful development is. It is to foster a peaceful international environment for our development and, at the same time, contribute to world peace through our development. That is something inherent in the concept of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

In the course of development, China will continue to take upon itself the duty of promoting the common progress and prosperity of mankind. We will seek and expand converging interests with other countries. China's development will not harm anyone or pose a threat to anyone. There have been Powers who sought hegemony once they grew strong. China will never follow in their footsteps.

China values friendship and also adheres to its principles. It firmly upholds its core interests. When it comes to sovereignty, national unity and territorial integrity, China will not yield or compromise.

China will continue to firmly support the leading role of the United Nations in international affairs. We will, as always, abide by the United Nations Charter and fulfil in good faith our obligations under international conventions. We will intensify cooperation with fellow developing countries and support their having a greater say in international affairs. We will remain forever a good partner of and brother to developing countries.

China's stability and development is conducive to a more peaceful international environment, a more democratic international order, a more prosperous global economy and a more harmonious and civilized world. China's development is an opportunity for the world, and the world stands to gain from a China that is better off. History will continue to prove that.

A China that develops peacefully, a China that is full of vigour and vitality and a China that is willing and ready to fulfil its responsibilities will always move forward together with the world. Let us join hands to work for a world of enduring peace and prosperity.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Wen Jiabao, Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Mr. Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of Canada.

Mr. Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Harper (Canada) (*spoke in French*): It has now been more than 65 years since the nations of the world, exhausted, and in some cases devastated, by years of war, established the United Nations. Canada was one of those nations — one of the many, in fact, whose fresh experience of conflict had persuaded their peoples that the possibility of a better world, one in which nations resolved their differences peacefully, was an objective worthy of their every effort.

Today, the Canadian people continue to believe in that purpose and will continue to strive to live by the principles that would make it possible.

(*spoke in English*)

Such principles are enshrined in the Charter of this Organization; that same United Nations Charter endorsed with happiness and hope by a former Canadian Government on that auspicious June day in San Francisco in 1945.

Those foundational beliefs recognize the sovereign equality of countries. They remind us of the obligation to settle disputes peacefully, and they demand we seek justice and uphold the human rights of all people. Those are values that Canadians hold dear, and, as the universal membership of this body implies, so do peoples the world over. That widespread consensus continues to convince the idealist in all of us that so much more is possible in this world of ours.

At the same time, it makes the gap between aspiration and achievement so disappointing. It calls us onward to do more, as successive Canadian Governments have worked diligently to do for almost a lifetime.

Those ideals, as well as an acute awareness of the broad concerns of the international community, especially those of the developing countries, continue to animate the Government of Canada, the Government that I lead today.

(*spoke in French*)

Those ideals have the enthusiastic support of the Canadian people, and I do not foresee any day or motivation that would lead us to cease in our endeavours in this regard.

The question, as always, is how this is to be done. Our preference is to take meaningful action, action that produces real results, action that helps people in their struggle with oppression, disaster and poverty.

(*spoke in English*)

Let me just run through some of those actions. As a founding member of the United Nations and the seventh-largest contributor to its finances, Canada has been a consistently reliable and responsible participant in United Nations initiatives around the world. This was so in the earliest days of the United Nations. It was so during the difficult days of the cold war, decolonization and the struggle against apartheid, and it remains so today. Canada continues to pay, for instance, a heavy price to fulfil our United Nations obligation to support the lawful Government of Afghanistan. We pay it with the resources of Canadian taxpayers, but more profoundly in sorrow for the priceless lives of our young men and women who serve there in the Canadian forces, as well as, sadly, civilians who have also given their sweat and their lives in the service of both our country and the people of Afghanistan.

In Afghanistan, our military efforts have gone hand in hand with our reconstruction and development programmes. In particular, Canada supports those such as the Dahla Dam, which will have enduring economic benefit.

(*spoke in French*)

We have also invested heavily in other programmes which will improve the lives of that country's most vulnerable citizens, and we will continue to do so.

Our international engagement is by no means restricted to Afghanistan. In fact, elsewhere in the world, we have also expanded our efforts. We pledge to

double our aid to Africa,thereby making Canada a leader in the Group of Eight (G-8).

(*spoke in English*)

And we are on track to double our overall development assistance by March of next year. Furthermore, we have untied food aid, and all Canadian aid will be untied by 2013. Such measures significantly extend the purchasing power of Canadian aid funds.

Canada was also among the first last year at the G-8 Summit at L'Aquila to double support for agricultural development. During the economic crisis as well, we acted, in concert with our Group of Twenty (G-20) partners, to increase the lending capacity of development organizations like the Inter-American Development Bank and the African Development Bank. In particular, we have made a significant contribution to peace and security in Africa, including to peace initiatives, humanitarian assistance and reconstruction in the Sudan, since taking office in January 2006.

(*spoke in French*)

We have also provided leadership in peacebuilding in Sierra Leone.

Canada welcomes the resumption of direct talks between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. We sincerely hope that the discussions will be successful, and we will continue to assist the Palestinian Authority in building its institutions.

As members know, we have also engaged very extensively in Haiti, both before and since the terrible earthquake earlier this year. Canada was among the first nations to provide tangible relief in various forms, and it has made a long-term commitment to assist the people of Haiti in rebuilding their severely damaged country.

Most recently, Pakistan has faced devastating floods, and Canada has again responded swiftly. All these actions are born from Canadian ideals.

So allow me to say one thing. This Assembly should know that Canada is eligible to serve on the Security Council. And if we are elected, we will be ready to serve.

(*spoke in English*)

And if called upon to serve on the Security Council, we shall be informed by these ideals and strive to further them, just as we have striven to implement Security Council resolutions.

I should also mention Canada's role this year as Chair of the G-8 and host of the most recent meeting of the G-20. We have tried to ensure that these gatherings serve the broader interests of the entire global community. In preparation for the G-20, we conducted wide-ranging outreach sessions, including with the Secretaries-General of the Commonwealth, la Francophonie and, of course, this Organization. We used our chairmanship of the G-8 to reach out to leaders from Africa and the Americas and to secure an agreement to enact the Muskoka Initiative for maternal, newborn and child health.

(*spoke in French*)

Such progress is literally vital in meeting the most achievable of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals — to reduce the appalling mortality among mothers and children in developing countries.

We are mobilizing support from donor nations and private foundations. Together, we should be able to mobilize more than $10 billion over five years. This will contribute in a major way to the Secretary-General's Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health. Likewise, we announced here two day ago that Canadian taxpayers would make an enhanced replenishment of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

(*spoke in English*)

We did these things for one simple reason: to alleviate the suffering and, indeed, save the lives of people all over the world who are among the millions afflicted with these grave and debilitating diseases. Actions such as these are a moral imperative. It is essential that we strive to make a significant, actual difference in the lives of the world's most disadvantaged people. Who, seeing his neighbour distressed, will pass by on the other side of the road?

That is why we have also used our chairmanship of the G-8 to further the essential ethic of accountability. We published the first accountability report to ensure that, as donor countries, we fulfil the pledges that we make. Our words must be translated into action and we must make a real difference to those who need our help. And to that end, as many of you also know, Canadian taxpayers have forgiven debts

totalling $1 billion owed by the world's poorest countries.

However, let us not limit our horizons by looking just at the least we can do. Much higher goals are within our capacity if we will but reach for them. In the short time that I have here today, there is one thought above all others that I wish to share.

(*spoke in French*)

It is the pressing need in the twenty-first century for all the States of the world to adopt an enlightened view of sovereignty. As I said earlier, respect for sovereignty is a fundamental principle of the United Nations. However, the global recession of the past two years has taught us, we hope, a painful lesson. We have been forcefully reminded that, in this shrinking world, we all travel together in a single boat, not as solo voyagers, and that how we travel together matters. This is because our interests are all interconnected: from climate change to health and pandemic threats and to, of course, the economy.

(*spoke in English*)

For example, nations that do not consider the effects of their economic choices on others may hurt not only their trading partners, but themselves as well. Those who succumb to the lure of protectionism soon find that trading partners denied a market also lack the means to be a customer. To recognize that is to understand the need for enlightened sovereignty, the idea that what is good for others may well be the best way to pursue one's own interests. In business, it is called win-win, and it is good for business. In international affairs, it is good for development and for justice, and it is in the spirit of the United Nations Charter. It is therefore of the highest importance, in a passionate world of competing interests and principles, where every person left to himself does what is right in his own sight. In such a world, the need for an enlightened, expansive view of sovereignty is as great now as it ever was.

At the outset of these remarks, I referred to the origins of the United Nations. It was founded at the end of the greatest and most destructive war that had ever disturbed the ocean of humanity. That war was certainly attributable in part to an extreme and pernicious nationalism. But we should never forget that appeasement and expediency also allowed fascism to gather such strength that it required the whole and undivided effort of the world's free peoples to subdue it.

The United Nations mission has grown over time, but its core job remains the same: through peace and development, to build a better world, to prevent war and conflict, yet at the same time, to uphold what is right and to protect the weak and the poor from those who prey upon them.

(*spoke in French*)

The Government of Canada has always been deeply committed to these objectives and to the Organization that nurtures them. It remains so today.

(*spoke in English*)

As we attend to our own affairs, in, for example, the protection of Canada's Arctic or the promotion of our trade or the pursuit of our values, Canada will be guided by the same advice we prescribe for others. We will listen to their concerns, we will speak the truth, and we will act with vigour. We will do all these things ever mindful that peace and opportunity for all remain, always, our ultimate purpose.

I know it has been a long meeting this morning, and I thank members for their attention.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of Canada for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada, was escorted from the rostrum.

The meeting rose at 2.25 p.m.